

FAME ^{AND} FORTUNE WEEKLY.

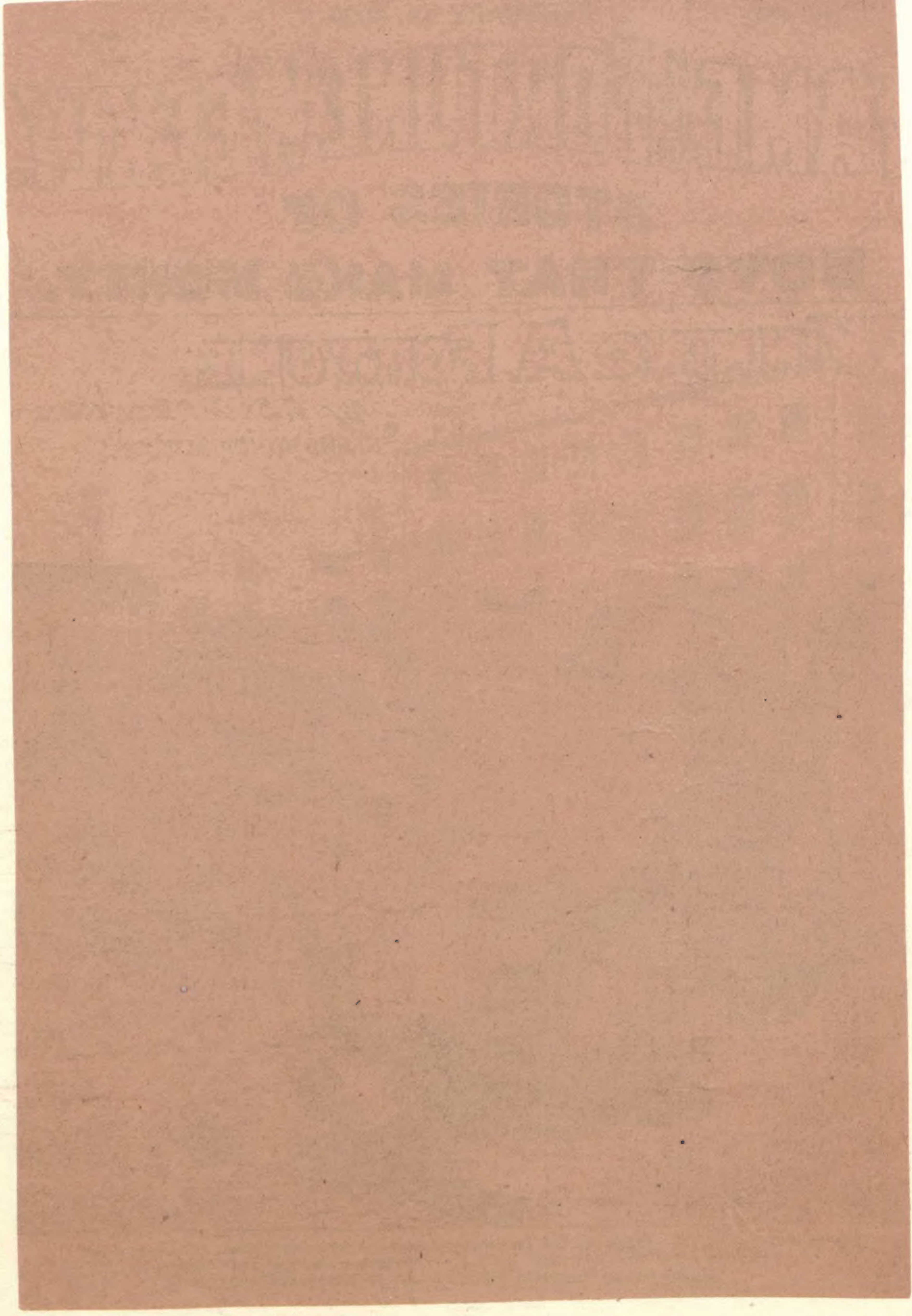
STORIES OF BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.

WINNING A FORTUNE.

By A SELF MADE MAN.
AND OTHER STORIES



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FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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WINNING A FORTUNE

—OR—

THE BOY HERO OF THE MILL

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

THE BOSS OF THE MILL.

"What's the matter, girls? What are you hanging around the door here instead of making a bee-line for your homes? Almost everybody has left the mill," said Joe Garland, a stalwart, fine-looking boy of eighteen, who was the most popular worker in the Hillsdale Cotton Mill, which was situated in the suburbs of that wide-awake town.

"We're afraid to go home," replied Nellie Marchant, the elder and the prettiest of the pair of girl operatives.

"Afraid to go home!" exclaimed Joe, in surprise. "What for?"

"Hen Parker and Brice Beckley are waiting out in the yard for us. We don't want anything to do with them, but they insist on going home with us. I wish you'd see us part of the way along the road," said Nellie.

"So those chaps are bothering you again, eh? I told them to cut it out or they'd hear from me."

"I heard them say that they were not afraid of you," said Edna Dale.

"That so?" replied Joe, with a snap of his teeth.

"Yes. They said you might think that you bossed the mill, but you couldn't boss them. They intended to take you down a peg or two and show you up as a bluffer."

"All right. We'll see. They're outside now, you say, Nellie? You two girls just start for the gate at once, and if those fellows interfere with you I'll be down on them in two shakes of a lamb's tail, and we'll see whether I'm boss of the mill or not," said Joe, in a tone that showed he meant business.

The two girls, with a return of confidence, walked out of the employees' entrance and took their way toward the gate.

Immediately two well-dressed boys, who had evidently been watching for them to appear, came from the corner of the building and started to cut them off.

Joe, from the shelter of the doorway, saw them advancing, and without more ado he followed after the girls.

"Ah, there, girlies! You can't get away from us," said Brice Beckley, gliding up beside Nellie Marchant.

"That's what!" said Hen Parker, ranging alongside of Edna.

The girls stopped.

"We don't want anything to do with either of you," said Nellie, with some spirit.

"Wh not? Aren't we of more importance than any other fellow in the mill?" asked Brice, in an unpleasant tone.

"We don't care for your society. We wish you'd leave us alone."

"I should think you girls would be proud to be seen walking with us."

"Well, we're not."

"Don't you know that my father is president of the mill company?" said Brice, puffing out his chest.

"And my father is superintendent," chipped in Ben.

"We are office employees and not common mill hands," said Brice.

"That's right; we're considerably above the persons in the workrooms," said Hen.

"Then why do you lower yourselves by talking to us, two mill girls?" replied Nellie sarcastically.

"Because you are the two prettiest girls in the mill, and that fact raises you to our level, to a certain extent," said Brice, with a smirk.

"We'd rather stay on our own level, Brice Beckley," said Nellie, in a freezing way. "At any rate, we don't care for your society, so kindly let us go our way and you and your friend go yours."

"You can't shake us like that. We are going home with you, aren't we, Hen?"

"Nothing surer!" grinned Hen.

"You're not going home with us," answered Nellie, with a flash in her pretty eyes.

"We generally do what suits us," said Brice, grabbing the girl by the arm. "Come along and we'll treat you both to candy on the way."

Hen caught Edna by the arm and the boys tried to force the girls toward the gate.

Then Joe, who had paused within earshot of the group, thought it time to interfere.

"Leave those girls alone," he said, striding forward.

Brice and Hen let go their grasp and turned around, aggressively, for they recognized Joe's voice.

Individually they hardly felt that they were a match for the muscular mill boy, but, collectively, they believed they could down him.

They decided to test the matter at the first opportunity.

"What are you butting in for, Joe Garland?" snarled Brice.

"Yes, who asked you to chip in?" said Hen.

"You've been annoying those girls long enough—too long, in fact. I told you yesterday to quit it. I want you to do it, understand?"

"Is that so?" sneered Brice. "You think because you've got the reputation of being the boss of the mill that you can boss us. Well, you can't boss us for sour apples, can he, Hen?"

"I should say not," said Hen. "No common mill operative is going to stand on our necks. If he doesn't look out I'll get my father to fire him."

"Look out that you chaps don't get fired yourselves," said Joe.

"We get fired!" cried Brice, with a derisive laugh. "Pretty good, isn't it, Hen?"

"He's crazy," said Hen.

"Are you fellows going to leave those girls alone?"

"None of your business what we're going to do," retorted Brice, aggressively.

"He's got a nerve to talk to you that way," said Hen. "Why don't you soak him, Brice?"

"Come along, girls, I'll see you home," said Joe.

"We'll grab him and trip him up, then we'll both soak him good," said Brice, in a low tone to his companion.

Both boys made a sudden rush at Joe, intending to take him by surprise.

Then something happened.

Joe hurled one of the rascals to the ground and turning upon the other gave him a left-handed blow that sent him reeling.

The two girls saw that their plucky young champion was well able to handle the pair.

"Come, girls," said Joe, "we'll get along."

Brice and Hen had got all they wanted and their not over-good-looking faces reflected a very groggy look.

They made no offer of retaliation for the handling they had received from the boss of the mill, but let Joe go off with the two girls.

"I think they'll let you alone after this," said Joe, quietly.

"Aren't you the plucky boy to down both of them at once?" said Nellie, admiringly.

"You're just too brave for anything," said Edna.

"No boquets, girl. I had right on my side, and that counted for a whole lot."

"We're awfully obliged to you, Joe," said Nellie.

"Don't mention it. I'm glad to be of service to you both."

"I hope you won't get into any trouble over this," said Nellie.

"Why should I? If those chaps tackle me again I'll not let them off so easy."

"I don't mean that. Henry Parker might tell his father that you hit him without cause."

"Then he'll tell what isn't true. If his father should call on me for an explanation I'll give it to him, and, if necessary, I'll have him send for you both to corroborate my statement."

"We'll do it," said Edna.

"Brice Beckley might complain to his father, too," said Nellie.

"I don't care if he does. This mill isn't run in the interests of those boys. The trouble with Brice and Hen is they have swelled heads because their folks are something above the common. If Squire Beckley hears the true facts of the case he is more likely to call his son down for trying to associate with you girls than to pull me over the coals for preventing Brice from doing it. You've seen the Squire often enough to know how pompous and self-important he feels. He would object in a decided way to his son placing himself on the same level with the mill hands. He regards himself as one of the favored few, and has no use at all for the working people, except in their capacity as employees. So I guess you needn't worry about me having a run-in with the Squire," said Joe.

Joe saw the girls as far as Nellie's home, and as Edna only lived two blocks further on, up the cross street, he said good afternoon to them and kept on toward the little cottage where he and his widowed mother and a sister lived.

CHAPTER II.

DISCHARGED.

The Garland cottage was a very modest-looking habitation as became people of moderate income and humble social standing.

Joe's father had been a carpenter—a man of steady habits, who did the best he could for his little family.

Through economy and thrift he managed to buy an acre of ground and build the cottage, which at first was mortgaged for half its value.

The dollar a week that Mrs. Garland invariably put by out of her allowance paid the semi-annual premium on a \$2,000 life insurance on her husband, and so when he died and the family income ceased, this and the house were all she had to fall back on.

The mortgage had been reduced to \$500, and this she let stand, as the property had a market value of about \$35,000, and the interest charges were only \$25 a year.

As soon as possible she put her son and daughter at work—the former at the cotton mill and the latter at the millinery trade.

That happened three years before our story opens, and during that time Joe had risen to fair wages in the big loom room, while Kittie Garland had become an expert hat trimmer, and was practically in charge of the shop where she was employed.

The little widow also took one boarder, who roomed with Joe—an orphan lad who worked at the mill and was Joe's particular friend.

His name was Bob Swift.

Joe and Bob usually went home together, but on the afternoon our story opens the former had been detained by the foreman of the room to help him make some repairs to a machine which had broken down.

Bob was sitting at the kitchen door waiting for supper to be put on the table when Joe reached home.

Kittie was home from her work and was helping her mother.

"Well, you got him at last, Joe," said Bob.

"Yes. I'd have been here a little sooner only for Brice Beckley and Hen Parker," replied Joe.

"How did they stop you?"

Joe explained what happened in the mill yard.

"They got what was coming to them," chuckled Bob.

"People who look for trouble generally find it. They'll try to get back at you for the dressing-down you handled them."

"They had better not if they know what's good for them."

"Those two chaps make me tired," said Bob. "They think because their fathers are connected with the mill company, and they are employed in the office, that they can lord it over the operatives and others, but I guess they'll haul in their horns after this. There's only one boss of the mill, and that's yourself. He'll be a good one who gets the honor away from you."

"It won't be Brice Beckley or Hen Parker, at any rate," said Joe.

"You bet it won't. They're a pair of lobsters."

"Joe," said his sister, coming to the door, "why are you standing there when supper is waiting? Go and wash up this minute."

"Yes, sis. I may be boss of the mill, but Kittie is boss of the house," laughed Joe, as he walked into the house and up to his room to make himself presentable to appear at the table.

An hour after work began at the mill in the morning every operative in the building had heard about Joe's performance of the preceding afternoon in behalf of Nellie Marchant and Edna Dale.

Nobody like Brice or Hen, who had made themselves unpopular by the frills they put on, and their overthrow was received with general satisfaction.

Joe was complimented by many of the men, some of whom had daughters of their own at work in one of the rooms, while the girls generally, among whom Nellie and Edna had spread the news, beamed on the young boss of the mill.

Although Nellie was one of the most popular girls in the mill, the attention Joe constantly showed her made many of the girls jealous, for most of them would have only been too happy if they could have captured the boy for themselves.

About ten o'clock the office boy came into the operating-room where Joe was employed and spoke to the foreman.

The foreman went over to Joe and told him that the superintendent desired him to report in his office.

"That means Hen has complained to his father," thought the boss of the mill.

On his way to answer the summons he stopped at the looms run by Nellie and Edna and told them that he guessed he was about to be called to account for the scrap in the yard, and that he might send for them to appear as witnesses in his behalf.

Mr. Parker, the superintendent of the Hillsdale Cotton Mill, was a tall, angular-looking man, with rather a sour look, which indicated that his disposition was not the sweetest in the world.

He sat at his desk in his small office off the counting-room, when Joe made his appearance.

As the boss of the mill passed through the counting-room, Brice and Hen, who were perched on high stools at a tall desk, looked up from the work they were engaged on and grinned.

"Now we'll see who's boss of the mill," whispered Hen to his chony.

"I hope he gets fired," returned Brice, spitefully.

Joe knocked at the superintendent's door and was told to walk in.

This was the first time Garland had ever been summoned to the office, but he was not particularly apprehensive as to the outcome.

"You sent for me, Mr. Parker," he said.

"I did," replied the superintendent, looking at him in no pleasant way, but then he hardly ever looked otherwise. "I understand that last evening you deliberately picked a quarrel with my son and Brice Beckley, and then, taking advantage of your brute strength, you struck both of them to the ground. What have you to say about it?"

Joe said he had considerable to say.

He told how Hen and Brice had been persistently annoying Nellie Marchant and Edna Dale, two of the operatives, with their undesirable attentions.

"The young ladies have tried to avoid coming in contact with your son and Brice, but the boys wouldn't let them alone," went on Joe. "I was detained in the mill after closing-time yesterday, helping the foreman repair one of the machines in our room. When I started for home I found the two girls inside the exit door, and I asked them why they had not gone home. They told me they were afraid to venture out, as Henry and Brice were waiting for them, having told them they intended to see them home. The girls had no desire for their society and appealed to me to protect them. I told them to go ahead and I would see that the boys did not molest them, and they started."

Joe then described what followed.

"My son and Brice have given me a somewhat different version of the affair," said the superintendent, sourly. "I will have them in here."

Hen and Brice were called in and asked to repeat their side of the question.

They did so without hesitation, and needless to say they made Joe's aggression out in the blackest of colors.

Joe said that they handled the truth very carelessly.

"Do you mean to say that my son is a liar?" snorted the superintendent.

"I mean to say that neither he nor Brice has made a correct statement. As it seems to be a question of veracity between the three of us, I request that you send for the girls and ask for their side of the story."

"I don't think it is necessary. You went home with the girls and I have no doubt you cooked up a story to suit yourself, and they will feel bound to bear you out, as working people always stand by one another. I am satisfied that my son and Brice have told the truth. Their stories agree in every particular. It is ridiculous that either of them would lower themselves to make friends with mill girls. They are young gentlemen and know their place. The mill hands have shown a disposition of late to find fault with the rules and regulations recently put in force, and it is time some were taught a lesson. You seem to be a sort of bully, for I am informed that you call yourself the boss of the mill. The unjustifiable assault you made on my son, and the son of the president of this company shows that you sought to extend your domineering tactics to them. It is time you were brought up with a round turn. I therefore discharge you from our employ and order you to collect what is due you and you get out at once. That's all. You can go."

Joe flushed with indignation, while Brice and Hen gave utterance to chuckles of intense satisfaction.

"You're not giving me a square deal, Mr. Parker," said Joe.

"What's that? How dare you question my mandate? Get out of here. I won't have such a boy as you in the mill. You're a fomentor of disturbance."

"I have as good a record as anybody in the place," protested Joe.

"Will you get out of my office, or shall I have you thrown out?" roared the angry superintendent.

"I'll get out, but I shall appeal from your unfair decision," replied the boss of the mill, resolutely.

Mr. Parker made no reply, but turned to the work on his desk.

Joe walked out of the room with head erect and eyes that flashed with the natural resentment he felt toward the superintendent.

CHAPTER III.

THE STRIKE.

Brice and Hen followed him.

"Somebody got it in the neck," said Brice, in a tone loud enough to reach the ears of Joe.

"Served him right," said Hen. "He won't boss this mill no more."

Joe felt that it would have given him a word of satisfaction to have gone for his two enemies and have punched their heads good and hard.

He restrained the inclination, for he knew it would only put him in a worse light.

He was mad clear through to think he had been treated to a throw-down without having been accorded a fair hearing.

However, this was in line with the superintendent's general attitude toward the employees.

He seemed to regard the mill hands with little consideration—as common people whose rights were subservient to his will.

Lately he had introduced a new set of rules and regulations for the mill hands to follow, and this new departure had aroused a general protest.

A committee, appointed to confer with him on the subject, had met with scanty recognition, and a public meeting of the operatives and other employees had been called for that evening to consider what could be done about the matter.

Mr. Parker was aware of this, and perhaps it had something to do with his treatment of Joe.

As a matter of fact the superintendent resented the action of the employees of the establishment, and he was led to bounce Joe as evidence that he was not going to be trifled with.

On the whole, he was rather glad of an excuse to strike the first blow, and he had an idea that it would bring the dissatisfied operatives to terms.

Joe went upstairs and announced to the foreman of his room that he had been discharged for laying out Brice and Hen the afternoon before while defending Nellie and Edna from their unwished-for attentions.

The foreman was staggered.

He had heard about the affair and, in common with all the hands, considered that the boy hadn't treated the two young rascals any worse than they deserved.

Joe put on his coat, and on his way to the door paused long enough beside Nellie's loom to explain the situation.

The girl was intensely indignant.

She stopped her loom and went over to the foreman.

"I want to go downstairs with Edna Dale and tell the superintendent our side of the story," she said. "It's an outrage that Joe should be discharged for defending us against those impertinent boys."

"You can go," said the foreman, "and give it to the super straight from the shoulder. If he's a half-way gentleman he'll listen to you girls. Tell Joe to wait the result."

The two girls marched down to the office and asked one of the bookkeepers to tell the superintendent they wanted to see him in his office.

"What are your names?"

"Nellie Marchant and Edna Dale."

The bookkeeper carried their names in.

In a moment or two he came back with word that Mr. Parker declined to see them.

"Did he tell you that?" said Nellie, with flashing eyes.

"He did, miss."

"We shall see him, anyway. Come on, Edna."

The clerk did not attempt to stop them, so the girls walked straight to the door of the superintendent's room and entered, Nellie in the lead.

Mr. Parker looked up, and an angry frown came over his face.

"I sent you word that I couldn't be disturbed," he said, jerkily. "I have no time to listen to your cooked-up statement in the interest of that boy whom I have discharged. Return to your work."

"We insist on telling our story," replied Nellie, pluckily.

"Insist!" roared Mr. Parker.

"Yes, and if you are a gentleman you'll listen to it."

That hit the superintendent hard, and he felt that he could not refuse to hear what they had to say.

"Go on, then," he growled, "and make it short."

Nellie did go on and told the facts exactly as they were. Edna corroborated her.

The truth of their story was evident in their manner and earnestness, and the superintendent believed them, but he could not afford to go back on his ruling.

He felt that his dignity would suffer.

Besides, he wanted to make an example of a workman, anyway, for he was sour on the whole force.

"Well," he said, grudgingly, "I will accept your story as the true statement of the circumstances, and I will lecture those young gentlemen and see that they do not annoy you in the future."

"And you will reinstate Joe Garland," said Nellie, eagerly.

"No. I did not discharge him because he took your part, but because he acted like a bully in striking my son and the son of the president. He could have seen you girls home without taking the law into his hands."

"But they started to attack him before he struck a blow," cried Nellie. "He only knocked them down in self-defense."

"He could have avoided a row had he seen fit. A boy who calls himself the boss of the mill shows that he is of a quarrelsome disposition, and I won't have such a boy in the mill. That's all, young ladies. You can go back to work."

"Since you refuse to do justice to Joe Garland I shall not return to work. I shall quit the mill at once. Come, Edna," and the beauty walked out of the office, followed by her companion.

They returned to the operating-room, where both girls told the foreman that their mission had failed and they had decided to leave the mill.

While they were away the news of Joe's discharge had gone through the building, like wildfire, and had produced something of a sensation.

When Nellie and Edna came out of the dressing-room with their things on, the excitement grew, and speculation was rife as to whether they had been discharged, too, for bearding the superintendent in his den.

They explained matters to two or three of the girls on their way to the door.

Then they went to the office and asked for their money.

After some delay they got it and then they went away.

Joe, in the meanwhile, had got his pay and departed, unaware that the two girls had resigned from the mill after their unsatisfactory interview with the superintendent.

When the noon whistle sounded, an hour and a half later, all hands quit as usual, and the girls crowded into their dressing-room.

The men hastily gathered at one end of the largest room, and it was evident that something was on the tapis.

About two-thirds of the hands usually went home to dinner, while the other third brought their dinner with them.

Those who went home were always in a rush to leave.

There was no rush on this occasion, and the doorkeeper waited in some wonder for the mob to pass out so he could check them off.

He could almost do that with his eyes shut, for he knew those who were accustomed to go home.

Not an operator made their appearance, and his surprise grew as the moments passed.

In the meanwhile a committee of three called on the superintendent and asked that Joe Garland be put back to work.

Mr. Parker roughly denied their request.

He declared that he had no further use for the boss of the mill, and that the boy was out for good.

"Is that your final answer, sir?" asked the spokesman of the committee.

"It is with this addition, that I think it a piece of impertinence on your part to call upon me with such a request," replied the superintendent.

"Then, sir, I am authorized to tell you that none of the hands will return to work this afternoon unless Garland is reinstated," said the spokesman.

"What!" gasped Mr. Parker. "Do you mean to say that you are going on strike on that boy's account?"

"You may call it that if you choose. It has been unanimously decided that Joe has not had fair treatment, and every worker in the mill is going to see that he gets it, for his cause is our cause. Any one of us might be made an example of in the same way, and what recourse would we have? We are human beings, like yourself, and are entitled to justice, and not to be handled without gloves.

If we allow you to establish such an unjust precedent the entire force will be at your mercy. Well, we prefer to stand or fall together. That's all, sir."

The committee waited to see if their determined attitude would have any effect on the superintendent.

It did, but not what they hoped for.

He sprang up and ordered them out of his office in terms that were far from gentlemanly.

He said that he did not propose to be dictated to by a lot of men who ought to be thankful they had good steady jobs under a liberal management.

If they wanted to leave they could go.

"There are hundreds of operators who will be glad to take your places. I can get all the people I want at short notice. Go, if you want to, but remember, every man or girl who quits work to-day will stay away for good. I won't take one of you back, do you understand? Not one of you, under any circumstances."

The committee were justly indignant over the insulting epithets applied to the body of workers, of which they were a part, and they retired without making any reply.

The entire operating force were awaiting their return in anxious suspense, few believing that the mission would be successful.

They had voted to stand by Joe Garland, the young boss of the mill, for a principle was at stake—the right to a square deal—and not a man nor a girl showed the white feather, though their ultimatum to quit work was a serious matter.

The committee filed in front of them, and the spokesman told them not only the result, but the language that had been applied to them as a whole.

"So he called us down, eh?" roared a red-headed man, named Jimmy Brady, who was noted for his quick temper and aggressive disposition. "Are we going to stand that?" he shouted.

A chorus of dissent followed.

"And we ought to be thankful for being permitted to work under such liberal management," continued Brady, with angry sarcasm. "He said that, too. It's a wonder he didn't say that we ought to be thankful that we're alive. He'll regret that speech, or my name's not Jim Brady. Come on, let's get."

Brady started for the door and the stairs, and the others followed him.

The doorkeeper was surprised to note that the whole force were going home to their dinners after a fifteen minute's loss of time.

It was such a singular circumstances all around that he questioned several as they passed out, but received no satisfaction.

When the last had walked out he rushed into the office with his time-roll.

"What in thunder can be up?" he said. "All hands are going home to-day."

"It means that the hands have struck because Joe Garland was discharged," replied the head bookkeeper.

CHAPTER IV.

JOE IS SURPRISED.

Not a wheel nor a spool turned in the Hillsdale Cotton Mill that afternoon.

All the operating rooms were deserted, not a single worker remaining to show allegiance to the company.

The only people at work were the yard men and the packers in the shipping department on the ground floor, and to judge from the talk and attitude of these men it was doubtful if many would return in the morning.

Squire Beckley, who was a lawyer by profession, was engaged on a case in court, and the first intimation he had that there was trouble at the mill was when a note, written by the superintendent, was handed to him by a messenger.

He couldn't leave the court just then, so he scribbled a hasty answer and sent it back to the boy.

Most of the hands went to their homes, carrying the unpleasant news to their families.

A number of men, including Jim Brady, didn't get any further than the first saloon on their route.

It was from this place the news of the strike at the mill spread throughout the town, and the two newspaper offices got wind of it.

Several reporters were assigned to the task of gathering

all the particulars for both the afternoon and morning dailies.

One man from each paper went to the mill to get the management side of the trouble, while the others scurried around to interview the operators and learn what their grievance was.

During the afternoon the following bulletin was displayed in the window of one of the newspaper offices:

"Strike at the Hillsdale Cotton Mill—All of the Operatives Out—Full Particulars in the Early Edition, Just Out."

Joe surprised his mother by coming into the house a little after eleven o'clock.

He surprised her still more by telling her that he had been discharged from the mill.

He told her the particulars of his interview with Superintendent Parker, and she agreed that he had been most unfairly treated.

"What are you going to do now?" she asked him.

"I haven't considered yet, mother, beyond my purpose to call on Squire Beckley and put the case up to him. A man who allows his prejudices to sway his judgment, like Mr. Parker does, is not a capable superintendent. I dare say it is the stock he holds in the company that enables him to retain his job," said Joe.

"There is no other mill nearer than Cloverdale, fifteen miles from here, where you could get work at your trade," said his mother. "If you went there you couldn't come home oftener than once a week. I shouldn't like to have you away a whole week at a time. Perhaps this trouble can be patched up."

"I hope so. I don't want to go to Cloverdale."

After some further talk Joe went to his room to think over the arguments he proposed to submit to Squire Beckley when he called on the pompous gentleman.

The Squire was not exactly a desirable person for one of the common people to approach, and Joe realized that delicate fact.

Still, being a lawyer, the boss of the mill had an idea he would weigh the evidence submitted to him on the scales of justice.

Joe failed to appreciate the fact that the Squire was a man as well as a lawyer, and that he had his private prejudices as well as the next person.

Squire Beckley had no very exalted opinion of the average workman.

If a workman brought a case to him professionally he would take it, even on a contingent fee, and would do his best to win it, not because he sympathized with the workman, but because that was his business, and it was to his interest to win.

Such a client he always treated, as he invariably treated persons of inferior social grade, in a patronizing way, as if he was really doing them a great favor to talk to them.

About half-past twelve Joe's mother called him to dinner and he went down to it.

He and Bob Swift were not in the habit of coming home in the middle of the day, consequently Bob was not expected to the meal.

Hardly had Joe taken his seat at the table when Bob walked in.

"Hello, Bob, what brings you home? You won't be able to eat and get back before one," he said.

"Not going back this afternoon," replied Bob, hauling up a chair, while Mrs. Garland bustled around to get a plate for him.

"Not going back!" exclaimed Joe, in surprise. "Why not?"

"There are reasons. You know, I suppose, that Nellie Marchant and Edna Dale quit because the super wouldn't take you back?"

"No, I didn't know it. Did they, really?"

"Sure as you live they did."

"They oughtn't to have done that. Throwing up their jobs wouldn't help me any. I'll have to see them and get them to go back."

"It wouldn't do any good. The mill is closed down this afternoon."

"Closed down! What are you giving me?" said Joe, incredulously.

"The truth. The fact that I am here ought to be evidence enough."

"What happened that it is closed down?"

"All hands on strike."

Joe uttered a gasp of astonishment.

"What brought the strike about?"

"You."

"Me!"

"Your discharge. The hands decided that you had not been fairly treated, so when the whistle blew a committee was sent to the super to ask him to reinstate you. He not only wouldn't, but insulted the committee for making such a request. He said he wouldn't be dictated to by a lot of cattle, meaning the operators."

"He was mighty complimentary to the people whose labor earns him the dividend on his stock."

"The committee then told him that if you were not put back on your job that the hands would not go to work this afternoon. He didn't seem to care. He said he could get all the hands he wanted, and told the committee that every operator who failed to come to work this afternoon would stay away for good, for he wouldn't take one of them back," said Bob.

"He said that?"

"Yes, but it didn't frighten the hands worth a cent. They quit, then and there. So we're all out at present."

"Well, this is a big surprise to me," said Joe.

"It is a surprise to me, too, for I didn't expect anything like that to happen," said Bob. "In fact, it is a surprise all around. The idea of you, one of the best hands in the mill, being fired for defending two of the girls against the rascally conduct of Hen Parker and Brice Beckley was the last thing I expected. We ought to lay for those chaps and give them the licking of their lives."

"They deserve it, but it wouldn't do to touch them without they started the rumpus. You ought to have heard the way they lied to Mr. Parker about the part they played in yesterday afternoon's business. They claim to be young gentlemen, superior in every way to common working people like us, but my! they're so far from that their gentility is out of sight. No decent fellow would be guilty of what they seem to be capable of doing."

"I should say not, and yet I suppose their parents think the sun, moon and stars circle around their heads," said Joe, with a look of disgust.

"I suppose that string of new rules framed by Mr. Parker had something to do with helping on the strike," said Joe.

"There was a meeting arranged for to-night to see what could be done about having the most obnoxious called in. I suppose the meeting will take place, just the same, and the more serious phase of the situation will be discussed?"

"Yes, the meeting will be held, for I heard the spokesman of the committee which waited on the super tell all hands to be present. You must go, Joe."

"Of course, I'll be there."

"What shall we do this afternoon? We might go to the mill and see if any of the hands are gathered there—on the outside, I mean."

"What's the use? I don't see any use of standing around and chewing the rag without some purpose. The place to do the talking that counts will be at a meeting where all are present. No amount of talking will alter the fact that there is a strike on, and some kind of organization will be necessary to fight the issue out successfully. I was going to call on Squire Beckley, and ask him to review my case, but I'm afraid after what has happened that I might as well give up. He will look upon me as the cause of the strike, and wouldn't listen to me," said Joe.

"If the super keeps his word none of us will ever get back to work at the mill," said Bob. "That will be mighty hard on most of the hands. But what does he care when he considers us like so much cattle? He'll send to Cloverdale and elsewhere for new operators, and the whole bunch of us will be out in the cold. I don't care, for I'd just as soon work at something else, but the old hands, who have families on their hands, will find things pretty serious."

The boys, having finished their dinner, got up and strolled outside, uncertain how they would put in their time that afternoon.

CHAPTER V.

JOE SAVES THE SQUIRE.

Although the boys had no particular intention of going to the mill, they were so accustomed to walk in that direction that, having no place to go, they mechanically directed their steps that way.

As they approached a saloon within sight of the mill they saw a bunch of men standing outside.

They proved to be a gang of loafers of who some occasionally took an odd job in the mill.

Of course, the subject that engrossed them was the walk-out, and they were planning some scheme for bringing the mill people to terms.

Jim Brady was the leading spirit of this crowd, and between the liquor they had drank, and his fiery language and hot-headed suggestions, they were in an ugly mood.

Brady was inside, more than half drunk, and when he was in that state he was a dangerous man.

"I guess we'd better steer clear of that crowd," said Joe.

Bob agreed with him and they crossed to the other side of the way.

At that moment Brady came to the door with several other men, said something to the bunch, on the sidewalk, and immediately the crowd started up the street toward the mill.

"I wonder what they are up to now?" said Bob.

Joe hadn't the least idea, but he was rather suspicious of the men's actions.

They were noisy and disorderly, and seemed to have some object in view.

The boys followed on the other side of the street.

"They seem to be bound for the mill," said Bob.

"They look to be in a fit shape to make trouble. If they start to do any damage they'll soon land in jail and give the rest of the workers a black eye in the opinion of the public. Strikes are never won by violence," said Joe.

The men walked up near the closed door of the mill yard and stopped.

The boys hung back and watched them.

* They could see Brady arguing about something.

Finally two men stepped out and joined the fiery leader.

The three then started along the fence, leaving the others behind.

The boys circled around to keep Brady and his two companions in sight.

They went straight to the door of the office and entered the building.

"They've gone to have another argument with Mr. Parker, I judge," said Joe.

"They're only wasting their time. The super is sure to throw them out. If he wouldn't listen to the committee who waited on him at noon, he certainly won't have anything to do with three boisterous chaps who are half shot and don't work here regularly," said Bob.

"Brady is no man to interview Mr. Parker," said Joe.

"He's too hot-headed, even when perfectly sober. In his present condition he is likely to queer everything. Cool and sensible heads are needed to engineer this difficulty. I'm dead sorry the hands decided to go out. I think it was a big mistake."

"That's my opinion, too. There is no doubt that the new rules have stirred the force up, but it was your discharge, followed by Nellie Marchant and Edna Dale throwing up their jobs, that brought matters to a climax. Hen and Brice are the ones who ought to have been discharged, or at least called down, for their conduct to the girls, but on account of being the sons of the superintendent and the president nothing was said to them. The injustice of the thing is what has angered the operatives, and then when the super insulted them on top of it all it was more than they could stand," said Joe.

"The trouble with Mr. Parker is that he has a low opinion of the workingman. Such a man ought not to have unlimited power over a large force of workers. He is sure to antagonize them sooner or later. Hello there's something doing in the office, as I expected," exclaimed Joe.

The boys could hear a big racket going on in there.

Presently the street door was opened and three men appeared, struggling together.

Two of them were the superintendent and the head book-keeper, who was a muscular man.

The other was Jim Brady.

The mill hand was shouting and fighting desperately, but he was getting the short end of the argument.

He was finally flung bodily out on the sidewalk.

He lay there for a moment or two half stunned and then staggered on his feet and reeled around trying to steady himself.

The two men who accompanied him into the building were led to the door and pushed out.

They made only a slight resistance, and then stood looking at Brady as the door was slammed behind them.

"Brady got it in the neck that time," grinned Bob.

"I dare say he got abusive, and wouldn't go out when ordered to do so, so he was thrown out. I can't say that I sympathize with him. He had no business to call on the superintendent, especially in his drunken condition. When Jones, who is the man at the head of the Anti-rules Committee, and who will doubtless take charge of this strike, hears about Brady's call here, Jim will get a mighty big call-down," said Joe.

"There come the rest of the fellows," said Bob.

The balance of the crowd were coming up, having got tired of waiting around the corner of the fence.

They had not seen the expulsion of Brady and his two companions from the building, but they judged that something was wrong when they saw Brady's actions.

He was shaking his fist at the windows of the office and making the air sizzle with his remarks.

When all of them came together, Brady began to harangue them in a vigorous fashion, pointing at the office and thumping his fists together in a way which indicated how mad he was.

At this juncture a large buggy, drawn by a handsome pair of horses and driven by a colored man, dashed up the street and alongside of the curb in front of the mill office.

A stout, pompous-looking gentleman sat in the back seat.

"There's Squire Beckley," said Joe.

"He looks as if he owned the town, doesn't he?" said Bob.

"I dare say he thinks if he moved away and took the mill somewhere else the place would go out of business."

Brady saw the carriage drive up and recognized the big mogul of the mill.

He and his bunch immediately started for it.

The boys saw him start to address the Squire.

That pompous personage got up to alight and ordered the crowd out of the way.

This made Brady furious, and he shook his fist at the president of the mill, at the same time hurling an insulting epithet at him.

The Squire snatched the whip out of its socket and slashed Brady in the face with the short lash.

Then he laid it about on the heads and shoulders of the rest.

With a scream of rage, Brady sprang up, seized the Squire by the arm and pulled him out of the buggy.

The gentleman fell on the sidewalk and the whole bunch jumped on him.

"Gee whiz!" cried Joe. "We must save him."

He rushed across the street, followed by Bob.

The darky driver sprang down to his employer's rescue, but two of the loafers attacked him and began beating him back.

Out of the office came the superintendent and two of the clerks to the rescue.

The men were now wound up for business, and picking up stones they beat the three men back, stretching the superintendent out senseless.

They then began smashing the windows and raising Cain generally.

In the meantime the Squire was being badly handled.

One of his eyes was cut with a blow from Brady's fist, while he received half a dozen severe kicks in the ribs.

The loafers were in a mood to half kill him, and had they not been stopped might have done him up altogether.

Squire Beckley shouted for help and tried in vain to defend himself.

At that critical moment Joe dashed into the crowd, shoving the men aside with all the vigor of his strong arms, and knocking Brady on his back with a well-directed right-hander.

"What in thunder is the matter with you chaps?" he cried, standing over the demoralized Squire with flashing eyes. "You ought to be ashamed of yourselves to attack a single man in this way. Stand back!"

"It's Joe Garland!" exclaimed one, as he recognized the plucky boy and they stared in astonishment at him to think that he, of all others, should come to the aid of the president of the mill from which he had been so ignominiously discharged.

Brady got up with blood in his eye.

He made a dash at Joe, with a string of imprecations.

The boy sidestepped, shot out his fist and tumbled the drunken man to the sidewalk again.

"Take him away before the police come and run in the whole bunch of you," said Joe to the others, who had held off because they recognized the boy as a friend.

"Why did you butt in to save that man?" asked one of them. "Don't you know he's the president of this mill?"

"Yes, I know it. You were fools to attack him, as you are likely to find out if he has recognized any of you. You'd better hurry away from here if you know when you're well off, for somebody in the office has doubtless telephoned for the police, and they are liable to be here at any moment," said Joe, turning his back on them and helping Bob to get the Squire on his feet.

The president of the mill was something of a wreck after the rough-house he had been treated to.

His face was cut in two places, one of his eyes was swollen, while his legs and body were sore from bruises.

His silk hat lay under the carriage, from which spot Bob rescued it.

The colored man had gone to the horses' heads and was holding the animals, for they were nervous and frightened after the racket.

It was clear that Squire Beckley did not recognize the boys as a pair of his late employees.

They were both dressed neatly in their best clothes, which they had put on before starting out, and did not look like mill workers at all.

"Thanks, my young friends," he said. "I believe you have saved my life by coming to my rescue. Those men, I dare say, meant to kill me. If you will lead me inside to my office I shall be greatly obliged to you. I won't forget what you have done for me, I assure you; particularly you, young man," he said, turning to Joe. "You knocked that man down just in the nick of time, and kept the others off. You shall be handsomely rewarded."

Joe made no reply.

He simply told Bob to take hold of the Squire's other arm and help him inside of the mill building.

When the crowd moved off with Brady struggling in their grasp, for he wanted to go back and do Joe up, the book-keeper and clerks, who had been driven back into the building by the fusillade of stones, came out and, lifting the senseless superintendent, carried him into the counting-room and thence to his office.

Joe and Bob followed with the limping president.

They led him to his office, and their presence and services were viewed with astonished displeasure by Brice Beckley, who was too much of a coward to face the mill men when they jumped on his father.

"Can I do anything else for you, Squire Beckley?" asked Joe, when they had placed him in his handsome pivot chair.

"Yes, yes, please ask somebody to telephone for a doctor. I feel pretty badly done up," said the magnate of the mill. "And don't go away, please."

Joe turned around and saw Brice at the door.

"Brice, your father wants a doctor at once. Send for one by telephone."

"Is he much hurt?" asked Brice, in some anxiety.

"I'm afraid he is. Don't lose any time in calling up the nearest doctor."

Brice hurried off to the telephone, and found that a doctor had already been sent for on account of Mr. Parker, who was still unconscious.

Joe told the Squire that his son had gone to the telephone to communicate with the nearest doctor.

"All right. Now, my brave lad, I want you to tell me your name, and that of your friend. I wish to know who I am under such great obligations to," said the Squire, who seemed to have lost all of his pompous manner under the strenuous experience through which he had passed.

"My name is Joe Garland, and my friend is Bob Swift."

The Squire was not familiar with the names nor identity of any of his late operatives, as he never had anything to do with his working people, so he did not for a moment dream that he was looking at two of them in a friendly way.

"Write your names and addresses down on that pad, as I shall want to communicate with you in a day or two," he said.

"I hardly think that is necessary, sir, as we are both well known in this establishment," replied Joe.

"Indeed!" exclaimed the mill president, in some surprise. "You are acquainted with some of the office force, or perhaps you know my son?"

"Yes, your son knows us and so do the clerks. It may surprise you to learn I have been employed in this mill for

a matter of three years, while Bob Swift has been working here for a year."

"What!" exclaimed the Squire, staring at him. "You have been employed in this mill for three years? In what capacity, may I ask?"

"In various capacities, for the last year and a half in the big loom room," replied Joe.

"Do you mean to say you are one of my workingmen?"

"Yes, sir, I was up to eleven o'clock to-day, when I was discharged by your superintendent, Mr. Parker, in what I consider an unjustifiable way."

The Squire seemed quite staggered.

CHAPTER VI.

JOE SCORES A VICTORY.

"You don't look like a working boy," he said, after a pause, during which he sized Joe up from head to foot.

"Maybe not, sir, for I haven't got my working clothes on now," replied Joe.

"And you say you were discharged, and without what you consider cause?"

"Yes, sir."

"You shall be reinstated—reinstated, do you understand? I am under great obligations to you, and to your friend as well. You shall be not only reinstated, but rewarded as well."

"I don't wish any reward, sir. If you will hand me an order reinstating me, that is all I ask. That will probably end the strike that took place at noon to-day and is on at this moment."

"Strike! Ah, I had forgotten about it," said the Squire, with a frown. "Did the operatives strike on your account?"

"Partially so, and partially on account of the new rules introduced by Mr. Parker, which, in our estimation, are not just what we like. I think, sir, if you will look into the matter you will agree that some modification ought to be made in them. But it isn't for me to make any suggestions."

"So the operatives quit work at noon to-day on your account, or partially so," said Squire Beckley. "Under such circumstances, had you not rendered me a great service. I should refuse to take you back, but you have redeemed yourself in my estimation. If you receive from me an order of reinstatement you think that will end this strike, eh?"

"I think I can promise that, sir. I will show your order at the meeting which has been called for this evening, and if you will also promise to look into the matter of the objectionable new rules I am satisfied that all hands will report in the morning as if nothing had happened," said Joe.

"Very well; as a reward to you I will yield all the points you ask. This is a concession I am not accustomed to grant to working people in my employ, but I am doing this for you and not for the operatives, who, I think, ought to be punished for interrupting the business of this company. However, we will let that pass. I am dealing with you, and you seem to be the boss of the mill just now. Hereafter if the operatives have any complaints to make let them make them through you. I will listen to you, but nobody else. I won't have any committees calling on me, or on the superintendent. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

The Squire, who was feeling somewhat recovered, took a sheet of paper bearing the company's imprint and wrote an order reinstating Joe in the mill and promising to consider the question of the new rules.

This he signed with his official signature and handed it to Joe.

"Thank you, sir; I'm very much obliged to you. Shall I hand this to the superintendent to-morrow?" said Joe.

"It won't be necessary, as I shall speak to him about you. You wanted the paper to show the operatives this evening at the meeting you spoke about. You are authorized to tell the hands to report in the morning at the usual time, in which event no notice will be taken of the half holiday they have taken of their own accord," said the Squire.

"I'll see that they report, sir," replied Joe.

At that moment Brice appeared at the doorway and said that several policemen were outside.

He also said the doctor had arrived and was attending to Mr. Parker.

"What's the matter with Mr. Parker?" asked the Squire, in some surprise.

"He was struck senseless by a stone when he rushed out to help you."

"Indeed! This has been a serious affair," said the Squire. "Send one of the officers in."

Joe said he and Bob would now take their leave.

"One moment," said the president. "Did you recognize the men who attacked me as people connected with the mill?"

"I must admit that they work here occasionally, but beyond that I hope you won't press me for information. The men were excited and did not realize what they were doing."

The Squire looked a bit displeased.

"I see no reason why you should shield their identity. But for you they might have killed me, at least that big ruffian you knocked down would. I think it is your duty to tell me who they were."

"There was no excuse for his attack on you, nor did he have any authority for calling at the office in behalf of the operatives. His actions were calculated to give the strike a black eye, and when the facts reach the attention of your working people his conduct will be repudiated."

"His name is Jimmy Brady," said Brice. "I recognized him, sir."

The Squire wrote it down.

He was satisfied to have the ringleader's name, as he had no doubt that provided with this information the police would be able to round most of the others up, and the Squire intended to make them all pay dearly for the attack they made upon him, and the superintendent.

Joe and Bob then left the office of the mill, glad they did not have to give away any of their friends.

"That was a ten-strike you made, Joe, when you jumped in and saved the Squire from Brady and his crowd. Some were not mill hands," said Bob. "That paper you got will satisfy the hands to-night, and everybody, excepting Brady, and probably some of his cronies will go back to work in the morning. You are certainly the boss of the mill, for you are now able to call off the strike."

"It was a fortunate occurrence for me and the operatives, though decidedly the opposite for Squire Beckley and Mr. Parker," replied Joe. "I am glad that the matter is in line for an amicable settlement. The people will have no excuse for refusing to return to their work in the morning."

"The super will probably make a kick against the settlement, as he told the committee that under no circumstances would he take back those who quit work this afternoon. It will be a great shock to his dignity to be obliged to eat his words, but I guess he'll have to put up with it and saw wood, for the president is the real boss of the mill," said Bob.

"He won't be able to block the arrangement, for I have the paper in the Squire's own handwriting and that binds the company," said Joe, in a tone of satisfaction.

"The operatives ought to vote you a gold medal, Joe, in recognition of your services to them. They'll only lose half a day's pay now, whereas had the strike gone on they would probably all have lost their jobs for good."

"I don't want any gold medal for doing my duty. The people struck by me, why shouldn't I return the favor?"

"Well, that true enough. It was largely on your account that they quit. But you've not only got yourself reinstated, but have secured a written promise from the Squire that he will look into the matter of the new rules. Of course, Mr. Parker will put up a big howl against having any change made, but you have the inside track of him, and he will be forced to accept any adjustment the president is willing to grant."

"I had no idea that so pompous a personage as Squire Beckley could be brought to behave in so reasonable a way as he did at our interview. It must have been the effect of the rough handling he received at the hands of Jim Brady. He certainly put it to him without gloves. Brady will be made to sweat for his share in the attack, and some of the others are likely to see their finish, too. They'll get no sympathy from the rest of the operatives, and they deserve none. They are not regular operatives in the mill, anyhow."

On their way home Joe decided to call on Nellie Marchant and let her know how things stood.

Joe, we might as well admit, was sweet on Nellie, and she was not indifferent to him, which was the reason why she

threw up her job when the superintendent refused to do justice to him.

Edna Dale always followed Nellie's lead, for the two girls were chums.

Bob had been trying for some time to make himself solid with Edna, but had only partially succeeded.

However, she liked him better than any other boy she knew, unless it was Joe, who was every girl's favorite, so Bob hoped to get there in time.

When the boys reached Nellie's house they found her and Edna together, each engaged in some kind of fancy work.

Mrs. Marchant admitted the visitors.

"Hello, girls!" said Joe, in his cheery tones. "What are you up to?"

"Up to our eyes in business," replied Nellie, laughingly.

"I'm glad to see that you are trying to keep out of mischief."

"Why, the idea! I don't call that complimentary," said Nellie.

"You mustn't mind what I say," replied Joe. "We have called to give you good news. Of course, you know that all the operatives struck work this afternoon?"

"Yes, Ada Smith came in and told me. I'm afraid the workers will find that they can't coerce the superintendent. He is a very disagreeable man to deal with. At least that is my opinion and Edna's. He was barely civil to us when we forced him to listen to us, after he first refused to see us. He accepted our story as the truth, but under no circumstances would he take you back. His attitude was so unfair toward you that, realizing that we were the cause that led to your discharge, we decided to quit work at the mill."

"Your quitting didn't do me any good, but something else did."

"Do you mean that the strike induced Mr. Parker to take water?"

"No. I haven't talked to the superintendent since I was fired, but I had an interview with Squire Beckley, and I've been reinstated by him. Not only that, but I got him to promise to go into the matter of the new rules, with a view to having their objectionable features cut out, or at least modified."

"Why, how did you work this miracle?" asked Nellie, much surprised.

Then Joe explained about the attack made on the Squire by Jim Brady and his crowd of outsiders, and how he and Bob happened to be on hand and had jumped in and saved him from being badly done up.

"The Squire was grateful for the service I rendered him, and I made the most out of it for the benefit of the operatives. I am authorized to direct them to report as usual in the morning, and I shall do so at the meeting this evening, which, I judge, will be attended by all hands," said Joe.

"Shall I call for you, Nellie?"

"You may."

"Will you permit me to call for you, Edna?" asked Bob.

"Yes, if you want to."

Joe showed the paper in the Squire's handwriting to the girls, and soon afterward they took their leave.

CHAPTER VII.

THE END OF THE STRIKE.

Mrs. Garland was greatly pleased when Joe told her that he had been reinstated at the mill, and that the strike might be considered as ended.

Her son told her how this satisfactory state of things had been brought about, and she expressed her sympathy for the Squire.

"He's not so bad as he's been painted, I guess," said Joe. "At any rate, he's a whole lot more reasonable in his attitude toward his workers than Mr. Parker is. The superintendent is a kind of slave-driver, who thinks the working people ought to feel grateful to be employed on any terms, and have no right to assert their independence. It might astonish him if he found out that many of the working people are superior to him in every way, except perhaps socially and financially."

"Brice Beckley and Hen Parker ought to know a whole lot more than me, for they have been to high school, but they don't show it," said Bob.

"The trouble with them is that they feel too self-important for their shoes," said Joe. "Boys who have well-to-do rich fathers often show that tendency, and it gets them disliked."

Shortly after supper the two boys started out to go to the homes of the girls they had offered to escort to the meeting.

An hour later they turned up with their partners at the small hall which the committee of the mill operatives had rented for the evening.

They found the major part of the employees already on hand.

The girls were inside, but half of the men and boys were on the sidewalk, talking about the future of the strike.

Probably a third of those present privately regretted the hasty step, and felt rather down in the mouth over probable results.

The superintendent's threat that he would take nobody back who left that afternoon had a depressing effect on those who felt that they could not afford to remain idle long.

The majority had some spare funds put away for a rainy day, but a succession of rainy days would soon dissipate it, and then things would go hard with them.

All hands realized now in earnest that a strike was a serious thing, no matter how just the cause was at the back of it, and that the advantage was all with the company.

It would not be a difficult matter for the superintendent to replace all of the striking operatives, and then how would they come out?

And yet not one of them but rebelled at having been al- luded to in such a contemptuous way by Mr. Parker.

And they resented many of the new rules that had been put in force.

These rules they considered arbitrary and unnecessary, and adopted by the superintendent to humiliate them.

At that moment Mr. Parker was probably the most disliked man in Hillsdale.

Nobody appeared to feel sore at Joe Garland because he had practically been the moving cause of the walkout.

Men who had daughters employed in the mill up to noon that day shook him by the hand and praised him for the bold front he had put up in defense of Nellie Marchant and Edna Dale.

They felt he would have acted the same way in behalf of their daughters had there been need of it.

Soon after the arrival of Joe and Bob, with their girls, the men and boys outside piled into the hall and the spokes- man of the committee, George Jones, called the meeting to order.

The first thing he did was to ask those present whether they intended to stick together.

There was an unanimous response.

Nobody would publicly admit that he felt faint-hearted.

Jones then made a speech in which he said that it was the intention of the committee to call on Squire Beckley next morning and try to effect an amicable settlement.

He expressed an optimistic opinion in order to encourage the workers and all hands looked more cheerful.

Then a damper was thrown upon the meeting when an operative named Watkins got up and informed the crowd that he was afraid Jim Brady had queered them altogether.

"How is that?" asked Jones from the platform.

Watkins said he had heard from a couple of outsiders that Brady and a crowd of his chums had called at the mill that afternoon and assaulted both the president and the superintendent and smashed all the windows in the office.

If a bomb had exploded in the hall at that moment it could hardly have caused greater consternation.

If it was true it probably sounded the knell to all their hopes.

"Does anybody else know anything about this matter?" asked Jones, looking around.

"I do," replied Joe. "And I regret to say that it is true. Bob Swift and myself were there when the outrage hap- pened. Mr. Parker was knocked senseless by a stone, and Squire Beckley was pulled out of his carriage by Brady and then the whole bunch jumped on him. One of his eyes was blackened, his mouth was cut and his legs and body covered with bruises. If Bob and I had not gone to his rescue and beaten the drunken rascal off he might have been killed, for Brady was in a furious state, and as ripe for murder as anything else."

A murmur of consternation went around the room.

"We are done by that rascal!" roared a worker, who felt

that the strike was going to play the mischief with himself and his family.

"This is certainly very serious," said Jones. "We will have to publicly repudiate the conduct of Brady and his friends. They ain't regular mill hands."

"But it will kill our chances with the company," said a man in the crowd, and the majority agreed with him.

Everybody started to talk, and considerable confusion en- sued.

Joe took advantage of the chance to work his way up to the platform.

"I want to address the meeting, Mr. Jones," he said. "I have good news to tell all hands, and this is the time to tell it."

"Come right up, Joe," said Jones. "The operatives will listen to you for you are the most popular workman present."

Jones then announced that Joe Garland had something of importance to say to the meeting.

Joe stepped to the edge of the platform.

"Ladies and gentlemen, fellow-workers, I have come for- ward to say something which I think will relieve all the anxiety called up by the statement, corroborated by me, that Jim Brady made a most cowardly and unjustifiable attack upon the president and superintendent of the Hills- dale Cotton Mill, this afternoon. I stated on the floor that Bob Swift and myself went to the assistance of Squire Beck- ley. We succeeded in extricating him from the half-drunken bunch, and then we led him into his private office. As I had knocked Brady down twice, the Squire seemed to recog- nize me as the chief factor of his rescue, and he expressed his gratitude in a way that showed he meant it. At the same time he did not identify either Bob or me as mill hands. We had on our Sunday suits, as we have now, and he took us for boys on a par with his son, for he asked me if I was ac- quainted with Brice. I admitted that I was, and then I came out with the truth—that I had been employed in the mill for three years and had been discharged by Mr. Parker this morning, unfairly. The statement that I was a mill hand seemed to stagger him considerably. However, he drew a fresh breath and said that I should be reinstated at once, and also rewarded. I didn't want any reward, but I did want to end the strike satisfactorily all around. So I told the Squire as my discharge had considerable to do with the people quit- ting work, that I guessed my reinstatement would end the strike, particularly if he consented to look into the objec- tionable new rules. Well, to cut it short, I have a paper in my pocket officially reinstating me, and also promising to consider the question of the rules. This paper was written and signed by the Squire in the presence of Bob Swift and myself. In conclusion, I will say that Squire Beckley author- ized me to inform you here this evening that you all can report at the usual time in the morning and go to work, just as if you had not taken a half holiday without permission of the company."

As Joe uttered those words a tumultuous cheer that shook the hall went up from the throats of the assembled opera- tives.

For some moments the majority acted like half-crazy peo- ple, so pleased were they to get out of the trouble which had been facing them.

"Three cheers for Joe Garland, the boss of the mill!" shouted Watkins, as soon as the excitement had partially sub- sided.

The cheers were given with a will, and the girls and women waved their handkerchiefs like a forrest of white plumes swayed by a high wind.

Joe held up his hand for silence.

"In doing a great favor for the president of the mill I seem to have got into his good graces to a considerable ex- tent. At any rate, he desires me to tell you that if you have any grievance in the future he insists that you shall not send any more committees either to him or the superintendent but depute me to act as your emissary. He won't see anybody else."

"You are boss of the mill for now!" cried one of the men.

"Don't get a swollen head, Joe!" shouted a boy at the back of the room.

"I hope, ladies and gentlemen, that my good fortune will be any advantage to you," said Joe, looking at the crowd with a smile. "But I am sure that I have been waiting for some time, and it is now or never. I am going to tell it on his head to a man who is the fact."

There was a general laugh at his remark, and one of the girls cried out, "You are all right, Joe!"

"I hope I am," he said, "and I mean to continue to be. I cannot conclude my remarks without thanking you, individually and collectively, for standing by me when I was discharged without any real reason. It shows a loyalty on your part that I fully appreciate. At the same time I felt very sorry when I heard that you had all quit work as an expression of your resentment, not only for my discharge, but because the superintendent alluded to you insultingly. While that was an insult, you should rather have received it with contempt for a man who showed himself to be so little of the body of honest and skilled workers in his employ, because he had the power to knock me out of you, and in such a case it is not wise to knock one's head against a stone wall. You understand what I mean. However, all's well that ends well. It was a fortunate circumstance that I was unexpectedly placed in the position where I could take advantage of the chance to bring this brief strike to a satisfactory conclusion. So now all you have to do is to go home, turn in and get up in the morning with the knowledge that you haven't lost your jobs. That's all."

Joe bowed, and then went to Jones to show him the paper which proved he was reinstated, and that the president had agreed to consider the question of an adjustment of the new rules.

A portion of the workers went home right away, but the loom room remained until Jones confirmed everything by holding up the paper Squire Brady had given Joe in consideration of his services in his behalf.

When Joe stepped on the floor he was surrounded by a crowd that could not half express their warm sentiments towards him.

They declared that he was not only the boss of the mill, but the boss boy in Hillsdale, and that he deserved a gold medal for ending the strike at its outset.

The meeting which had threatened to be something like a funeral wound up in hilarity and good feeling.

Jim Brady and his companions had stayed away, for after their outbreak they thought it best to go in hiding.

If they had shown up they would have been arrested, for several officers appeared at the hall with warrants for Brady and half a dozen others, whose identity not being known were mentioned under the legal fiction of John Doe.

On the whole, it was a great night for Joe Garland.

Henceforth he would be more than ever recognized as the boss of the mill.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INFERNAL MACHINE.

The two Hillsdale dailies next morning reported that the mill strike had ended with satisfaction to all parties concerned, and that the operatives had gone back to work that morning.

They also printed at some length the story of the attack and others not connected with the mill forces.

Joe Garland and Bob Smith were given full credit for having rescued the president of the mill from the hands of the rioters.

Some of the workers had been arrested up to the time the police went to work, but it was considered only a question of a short time when they would be rounded up by the police who were looking for them.

The mill presented its customary busy aspect that day.

Everybody was happy, except perhaps the superintendent, who was indignantly conformed to the president's orders, after making a protest which the Squire overruled on the ground that the Squire had placed him under, and he was bound to obey. He was, however, somewhat disgruntled at the result.

Bob Smith and Joe Garland were praised for what the young men had done, but the Squire, though his father might have been fatally hurt for all the assistance he would have given them, was not at all concerned for his own welfare, and he was not at all concerned for his own safety, and he was not at all concerned for his own safety.

"It seems as if that duffer has got back," he

said to Hen, as he was checking off a number of invoices his friend had made out.

"Me, too," replied Hen. "My father is as mad as a hatter over it. I heard him tell my mother that it made a farce of his authority in the mill. He said he had a great mind to resign as superintendent."

"My father seems to think that Joe Garland is something above the common, even if he is a mill hand. He told my mother that it was a most astonishing performance the way he bowled that drunken Jim Brady over—a man who seemed strong and burly enough to eat him. Of course, it was an accident. You can't tell me that he can whip a man. The fact was, Brady was too drunk to defend himself, or he never would have got away with him as he did. You can take my word for it that it was a fluke."

"Brady will polish him off when he meets him, I'll bet," said Hen.

"No fear of that, for Brady will be arrested on sight."

"I'd like to hear of him doing up Garland before he's pinched."

"You won't hear of it, for that duffer will not get in his way."

"Never mind them, let's talk about something else. Tomorrow is Saturday. We must get off early and take a sail down the bay in your boat," said Hen.

"All right, Hen, you're on. I'll speak to the head bookkeeper and tell him that the doctor told us we must not work too hard, but get all the open air we can. He'll take the hint and let us go around town."

After gathering up the invoices, O. K.'d them and took them out to the shipping clerk in the next room.

Upstairs in the big loom room Joe Garland, who had developed into quite a machinist, was fixing up something that had gone wrong in Nellie Marchant's loom.

He ran a loom himself at one end of the room when not otherwise employed, but not half of his time was spent at it.

Nellie was talking to him while she was waiting.

She had to bend down over him to make herself heard above the hum of the bobbins and the jar of the machinery. "How are you getting on, Joe?" she asked. "The superintendent has come up and is looking around the room. I don't want him to see me standing here doing nothing."

"It isn't your fault. You can't get busy till I've fixed this part of the machine so it will run," replied Joe, working away with his wrench.

"Well, you know what he is. And I guess he's unusually grouchy this morning. He looks as if he ate something for breakfast that has disagreed with him," and she laughed softly.

"I dare say he's sore to think that all the old hands, including myself, are back on the job," replied Joe.

"Several of the men are not back this morning," she said.

"You mean Brady and three or four of his friends who were concerned in yesterday's outrage. They're out for good, and mighty lucky they are that they're not in jail," said Joe.

"I think a drunken man is a terrible thing to face when his temper is up. I don't see how you ever do it, Joe."

"It was my duty to try and save the Squire if I could. I would have done as much for Mr. Parker had he been in that fix instead of the president, though he did bounce me in an unpleasant way."

"You're a nice boy, Joe. I don't wonder all the girls are sweet on you."

"They don't interest me. There's only one girl I care for, and you ought to know who that is."

Perhaps Nellie did, for she blushed and remained silent.

A moment later Joe got up and started the machine.

He watched it run for perhaps a minute and then said:

"It's all right now, Nellie. You can go ahead."

He picked up his tools and walked off, followed by the admiring eyes of most of the girls as he passed along.

Noontime came and the mill shut down for the usual dinner hour.

Joe and Bob got their pails and sat down in the sun-bath, near the engine-room, to eat and talk, as was their habit.

The gate stood open as the timekeeper had left it, and through it the boys could see the side street, with a vacant lot on the other side which had not been as yet utilized for building purposes.

The boys had about finished the contents of their cans when an old man with snow-white hair and a long, heavy beard of the same color stopped at the gate and looked into the yard.

He carried a cane and was bent over as if age and some kind of infirmity had taken all the starch out of him.

He had very bright eyes, however, and these seemed to take in everything in sight.

No one took any notice of him, and after a few moments he ventured into the yard and hobbled in a slow and unsteady way over to the door of the engine-room, which was a one-story brick structure on one side of the mill proper.

The engineer had gone home to dinner, leaving his fireman on duty, and that individual was seated on a stool, under the window opposite the door, eating his dinner out of his pail and absorbed in the columns of the Hillsdale Morning Globe.

"I wonder who that old guy is and what he wants in here?" said Bob.

"I couldn't tell you. Maybe he's a friend of the engineer or the fireman," said Joe, who did not take any particular interest in the ancient visitor.

"He looks the very picture of Rip Van Winkle after his sleep of twenty years in the mountains," grinned Bob. "There he goes into the engine-room."

The white-haired old man entered the place so lightly that the fireman did not hear him and consequently did not look up from his paper.

With a stealthy movement the old fellow made his way to the back of the engine and, leaning lower, took something out of his pocket and after fingering it a few moments placed it under the heavy steel driving-arm of the engine, now, at rest just off the dead center.

Then he straightened up and glided to the door with remarkable celerity for one of his apparent years, and utterly at variance with his former slow and labored gait.

Stepping outside, he resumed his former attitude, but his walk was a bit faster than when he came into the yard.

He soon reached the entrance, walked out and disappeared from the sight of the boys.

"He didn't stay long," said Bob.

"No, I guess he wanted to see the engineer, but Brown has gone home to dinner," said Joe, getting up and stretching himself. "I'm going to get a drink, Bob," he added, starting for the engine-room, where there was a cooler.

Bob nodded, drew his hat over his eyes and yawned in a lazy way.

Joe entered the engine-room.

The fireman looked up and recognized him.

"Hello, Joe!" he said. "I was just reading about your strenuous encounter with Jim Brady and his friends yesterday. You are certainly a lad with sand. I don't see how you ever got away with Brady. He's a tough nut at any time, but never more so than when he's got a load on."

"I didn't give him a chance to do anything. I know how to handle my fists, while he doesn't appear to be blessed with much knowledge in that direction. Who was your visitor?"

"What visitor?" asked the fireman.

"The old white-headed chap who stepped in here a few minutes ago."

"I didn't see anybody. You must be mistaken."

"No, I'm not mistaken. Bob and I saw him come in here."

"Where is he, then?"

"He's gone. He didn't stay more than three or four minutes."

"Well, I didn't see him. Maybe he was looking for Brown."

"Probably. I'm going to take a drink."

"Help yourself."

Joe stepped for the cooler, which stood on a shelf behind the engine.

As he reached for the cup and turned the spigot he heard a peculiar ticking close by, like that of a clock.

He listened as he drank and wondered where the sound came from, for the clock was in front and it was not a clock.

When he placed the cup on the shelf he noticed that the sound came from the low brick trough in which the driving-arm revolved.

He walked over a step or two and his eyes following the sound he saw a small metallic square canister standing in the trough.

The ticking plainly came from that.

He moved down and picked it up.

The ticking once ceased and he heard a tick, tick, tick.

Then he stood and looked at it the ticking became more rapid.

"What in thunder is this thing?" he asked.

"What thing?" asked the fireman.

"Come here and look at it."

The fireman came over.

"Where did you find that?"

"Down there under the driving arm."

"What makes that noise? It's ticking like a clock."

"Don't you know anything about it?"

"No."

"Why should such a thing be under the driving arm?"

"It shouldn't be."

"Well, that's where it was. By George! could that old man have placed it there? If he did it was for a purpose. What if it should be an infernal machine intended to blow the engine-room up. The first revolution of the driving-wheel would have brought the arm down with crushing force on it and then——"

"Good gracious! throw it out!" gasped the fireman, in a panic. "It might go off in your hands and blow both of us to kingdom-come, with the engine-room."

Joe said not another word, but darting to the open window threw the canister toward a heap of ashes.

Instead of striking the ashes it went over the pile and struck an iron barrow which lay against the heap.

There was a bright flash of light and a stunning report.

The engine-room shook from the concussion.

The pile of ashes disappeared in a cloud of smoke, while the fence at that side was blown outward, like it were made of cardboard.

As for the barrow, it was shattered into a thousand splinters.

The mill itself swayed as if from a shock of earthquake, and the greatest consternation took place both inside and out of the building.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER THE EXPLOSION.

Joe and the fireman were sent staggering around for a moment or two before they recovered their balance, and found themselves covered with fine particles of the glass blown out of the back engine-room window.

"My gracious!" exclaimed Joe. "What an escape!"

The fireman's face was white, and he shivered as from the ague.

He couldn't utter a word so upset was he.

The shock had startled the half-asleep Bob into broad wakefulness and sent him to his feet.

The puff of white smoke rising from the rear of the engine-room brought the workmen, who had rushed out of the building, in that direction.

People for blocks around the neighborhood came running toward the mill, wondering what had happened.

The general impression was that the boiler in the engine-room had blown up.

The superintendent and the office force had run out of the counting-room on to the sidewalk, in fear of their lives, but finding that nothing more followed they hastened into the yard.

Joe and the fireman had gone out of the engine-room by the back door, and were looking at the results of the explosion—the dismantled fence, the scattered ashes and a hole in the ground.

"The ash pile saved the engine-room from the worst of the shock, I guess," said Joe, "otherwise the side of the mill would have been driven in just as the wooden fence was blown out."

"If you hadn't come into the engine-room for a drink, noticed the ticking inside that bomb, picked it up and finally threw it out of the window in time the engine, boiler and house would have been blown to pieces, and then where would I be now? You saved my life, Joe, as well as the company's property, and I shan't forget it," said the fireman.

At that moment Bob came on the scene.

"What exploded, Joe?" he asked. "I thought it was the boiler at first, but when I saw nothing wrong with the engine-house I knew that something else must have caused it."

"A bomb exploded."

"A bomb!" exclaimed the astonished Bob.

"Exactly. A bomb."

"How do you make that out?" he asked, as a score or more of the men employees appeared around the engine-house.

From the open windows above probably a dozen girls were now looking down, after recovering from the panic the explosion had thrown them into.

The greater part of the girls had not yet come back from their homes.

Joe explained all that had taken place in the engine-room when he went in there for a drink, and the crowd listened in astonishment.

Most of them regarded Joe with wonder to think he had held that terrible canister in his hands for as good as three or four minutes, listening to its fateful ticking, and still survived to tell the tale.

Hardly had he finished his story when the superintendent made his appearance.

He looked at the hole, and the fence, and then around the place.

"What caused that explosion?" he demanded, sourly, of a hand.

"Joe Garland can tell you all about it, sir," replied the man.

The workers fell back as Mr. Parker walked up to Joe.

"Well, what do you know about this matter?" he said to the boss of the mill in a tone that was the reverse of pleasant.

"I know about all there is to tell, sir."

"Then out with it. What caused the explosion?"

"A bomb."

"A bomb! Impossible!" exclaimed Mr. Parker. "What would bring a bomb here?"

"A man, disguised with a white wig and long white beard, brought it here, I should judge, for such a person entered the engine-room just before I went in there to get a drink of water at the cooler, and went away inside of five minutes later," replied Joe.

"What kind of a yarn are you telling me?" asked the superintendent, angrily.

"No yarn, sir. I saw the man I mentioned go in there, and so did Bob Swift, but, of course, as we were outside we did not see him plant the bomb where I saw it, under the big driving-arm of the engine."

"How do you know it was a bomb?"

"I only guessed at it, but I think it has left evidence enough to prove its character. Nothing else could have done the damage you see."

"Tell me the whole story."

Joe did so, and Mr. Parker became convinced that an attempt had been made by some unknown enemy to blow the engine-room up.

Although it was quite clear that Joe had saved the engine-house, as well as the fireman's life, Mr. Parker did not take the trouble to thank, or even commend him.

He walked around, examining the mischief made by the explosive, and then hastened to his office, where he got into communication with the police over the 'phone.

Brice and Hen, together with the rest of the office force, came around to investigate out of curiosity.

They learned all the particulars from the workers.

They, too, were astonished to hear that Joe had had the bomb in his hands inside of half a minute before it went off.

"If he'd known what it was you can bet he wouldn't have picked it up," said Brice, who hated to think that all the credit for saving the company's property rested with the boy he disliked.

If the bomb had blown Joe into little bits he wouldn't have grieved a great deal, and the same sentiment was shared by Hen.

They tried to create the impression that Joe hadn't done such a big thing as the others believed he had, but nobody paid any attention to their remarks.

The engineer had come back from his dinner and was listening to the explanation the fireman was giving him.

He had heard the explosion, but at the time did not connect it with the mill, though the sound came from that direction.

A big crowd of spectators had by this time gathered outside the shattered fence, and they gradually learned that a bomb had created the damage.

Had the recent strike been on they would have laid the outrage at the door of some desperate operative, but matters having been adjusted to the satisfaction of the mill hands no one could be found to explain the object of the bomb being there.

It was now close on to one o'clock and the girls and other operatives, who had come home to their dinners, came trooping into the yard, all much exercised over the explosion

which they had heard, and which many feared had happened at the mill.

They soon learned that a bomb had created considerable havoc at the rear of the engine-house, and half of them went around there to see for themselves.

The rest went upstairs and crowded the windows overlooking the scene.

Joe's name was on every lip, and his narrow escape from a terrible death, with the fireman, was talked of on every hand.

When Nellie Marchant heard the facts she turned almost white, for she was more interested in the boss of the mill than she cared to admit.

In the midst of the excitement the whistle blew and work was resumed throughout the building, just as if nothing had happened.

Mr. Parker communicated with Squire Beckley over the wire—the president being confined to his house by the injuries he had sustained at the hands of Jim Brady and his crowd—and told him all the facts of the outrage.

He mentioned Joe's connection with the incident, but did not give him any particular credit.

Still his statement showed that the boy had saved the engine-house and all that was in it from annihilation, and Squire Beckley, who seemed to have taken a most unusual fancy for Joe, sent word that he be directed to report at once at his (the Squire's) residence.

Mr. Parker sent Brice upstairs to notify Joe to go immediately to the Squire's house, and the boy was soon on his way.

On his arrival he was shown into the library where he found the Squire reading a long legal document connected with an important case he had taken.

Pointing to a chair the pompous gentleman, who unbent somewhat before Joe, said he had sent for him to learn all the facts connected with the explosion.

Joe went into the details and described the white-headed and bearded old man as accurately as he could.

"It is my opinion he was disguised," said the boy, "but who he could be I've not the least idea."

"It must have been one of those ruffians who attacked me yesterday," said the Squire. "Who else would have any object in doing an injury to the mill?"

Joe agreed with him, for he couldn't think of anybody else who would be guilty of such a crime.

In fact there was only one man of those who had not showed up for work that morning that he would have suspected, and that was Jim Brady.

He told Squire Beckley so.

"If it was he, he must be a daring scoundrel to venture near the mill in broad daylight, knowing that the police of this town are looking for him," said the Squire.

"He had a good disguise and counted on that to pass unrecognized, supposing, of course, that he was the man who planted the bomb," replied Joe.

"Well, you saved several thousand dollars' worth of the company's property, and prevented the mill from shutting down, which it would have been obliged to do for lack of power to drive the machinery had the engine-house been destroyed. I shall see that you are suitably rewarded for the risk you ran, and the service you performed in this matter. I am more than ever convinced that you are an unusual kind of boy, several pegs above the position in life you now occupy. The company wants just such people as you in the higher branches of the business, and I think you can rest assured that you will be advanced in our employ. At any rate, I have taken an interest in you and you will find that an advantage to you."

The Squire said that was all, and so Joe took his leave and went back to the mill.

CHAPTER X.

IN THE HANDS OF THE PHILISTINES.

Of course, the evening papers had a graphic account of the explosion at the mill, and the thrilling part Joe enacted in it.

The reporters had interviewed him soon after he returned from the Squire's house, and they made the most of the story

be told, with such additions as they picked up from the fireman.

It proved a big sensation for the people of Hillsdale, who were not accustomed to sensations of that kind.

The morning papers printed the story over again, with added facts.

A crowd of curious idlers were on the scene early, looking over the damage done by the bomb and passing their opinions thereon.

Several carpenters were hired to repair the fence, and before noon all evidence of the explosion had been removed, but though the police were busy trying to find the rascal who planted the canister, they did not succeed in locating him, nor did they find any traces of Jim Brady and the three men who clung to him.

The balance of the bunch concerned in the attack on President Beckley ventured to return to work.

They were summoned before the superintendent and sharply questioned, but denied all connection with the outrage.

They declared that the reason they had not come to work the preceding day was because they were drunk and had not learned that the strike was over until late in the day before.

Mr. Parker did not consider their excuse convincing.

He believed they were part of the crowd which had made the cowardly attack on the Squire and himself and he had them arrested and taken to jail.

He hoped that at their examination they would admit their guilt and give a clue that would lead to the arrest of the four missing rascals.

This plan failed, however, as they all stoutly denied their guilt before the magistrate and as neither Squire Beckley, Mr. Parker, Joe, Bob nor the head bookkeeper were able to identify them as part of the crowd, they were discharged from custody.

Since the first of the month the mill shut down at four on Saturday, two hours earlier than on other week days, but this Saturday the engineer wanted to make some repairs to the engine, and he notified the superintendent to that effect.

As a consequence the mill was shut down at half past two, and the hands were paid off and dismissed for the week.

Joe and Bob reached home at about three, and having nothing on hand, Bob suggested that they hire a sailboat and go down the bay.

Both boys were fair boatmen, being accustomed to spend much of their spare time on the water, for they greatly relished aquatic recreation.

They lost no time in taking to a small wharf on the water front, where boats of all kinds were let out at so much an hour.

It was early in the summer and the weather was just right for a sail on the bay, upon the shores of which the town of Hillsdale was situated.

Having a water outlet, as well as rail connection was of great advantage to the town and had helped to build it up.

The bay was a fine body of water, and set in the midst of the entrance was a large green and well-wooded island, frequented during the summer by church and society picnics.

It belonged to the heirs of an old family whose ancestors had lived on it prior, and for many years subsequent, to the Revolution.

The ruins of the old stone mansion which had once been the scene of life and gaiety was still to be seen near the center of the island.

It had stood the storms and sunshine of nearly 150 years altogether, and bade fair to outlast a couple of more generations if not disturbed.

Moss-grown and covered with ivy till hardly a foot of the stone could be seen during the summertime, it was considered an interesting relic of bygone times.

Many persons of wealth had tried to buy the island, with the view of erecting a colony of summer residences there, and the town council had also tried to acquire it, but the two old maids who owned it, jointly, refused to part with it, for sentimental reasons.

No one lived on it, so it was looked upon as a good piece of property going to waste, except for picnic purposes, and then permission had first to be obtained from the old maids to land there, and on these occasions they always sent a man down to guard the old mansion against relic hunters, though there was nothing that could be carried away but pieces of stone or wood clipped from the solid-looking doors and such interior framework as remained.

The two boys looked for the mouth of the bay, intending to around the island and come back, unless they had time to go out a short distance on the ocean.

There were a number of craft on the bay, some of them small sailboats like the one they were sailing themselves, and other coasting craft, coming in or going out.

Among the former they recognized the small pleasure sloop-yacht owned by Brice Beckley, in which he and his friends often went out.

She was a dandy little craft, about thirty feet long, and a fast sailer.

Brice was quite an expert boatman and could manage his boat under most conditions that prevailed during the summer and fall.

"I see that Brice is out in his boat this afternoon, and I guess that is Hen who is with him," said Bob.

"You can depend on that, for they are always together," replied Joe.

"Birds of a feather," grinned Bob.

"So are we, only our feathers are different."

"Brice has a fine boat. That's one of the advantages of being born with a rich father. She's going some. I guess there's nothing in the way of a sailboat of her class in this neighborhood that can overhail her."

"And Brice knows how to sail her, too. I'll say that for him."

"Why shouldn't he, when he's been coached from the ground floor up by an expert?"

"They'll reach the mouth of the bay long before we'll get there, for they've got half a mile start and could beat us, anyway, on even terms. We may meet them coming back when we get out there."

"I'm not stuck on meeting them. They're not my style."

The catboat slipped along like a gull skimming the water, and they began talking about something more interesting than Brice and Hen.

The yacht had reached the island, scooted along close to the shore and then disappeared around the seaward end.

In the course of half an hour the catboat reached the end of the island, but they saw nothing of the yacht ahead.

"I guess they've gone around the island," said Bob.

"We'd have seen them coming back if they had done so," replied Joe. "I have an idea that they have landed somewhere."

"What for—to gather wildflowers?" grinned Bob.

"Hardly. They would have other reasons for landing."

"Shall we go outside or around the island?" asked Bob.

Joe pulled out his silver watch to see what time it was when a cry, as from a person in distress, was wafted to their ears from the center of the island.

"Hello! What was that?" cried Joe.

"It sounded like a cry of some one in trouble on the island," said Bob.

They listened and in a few moments the cry was repeated.

"Sounds like a boy's voice," said Joe. "Maybe Brice and Hen have landed and got into trouble."

"What trouble could they get into on the island? There are no dangerous places that I know of and I've been all over it," said Bob.

Again came the cry, and this time the boys distinctly heard the word, "Help!"

"That settles it. We must put in and see what's wrong," said Joe, who was always ready to help friend or foe out of difficulty.

As the boat shot toward the island they listened for the cry again, but they heard it no more.

In a few minutes they ran the catboat into a little creek, and Bob sprang ashore with the mooring line in his hands.

He made the boat fast to a convenient tree, and then the two started for the center of the island whence the cries had come.

There were so many trees, and the shrubbery was so dense that they had to pick their way along, and this delayed their progress some.

Presently they noticed quite a smoke ascending into the air, and blowing away seaward.

"If Brice and Hen are here they've built a fire," said Joe.

"I don't see any sense of that on a warm afternoon," said Bob.

"Well, some body has built a fire for some purpose."

"That seems to be coming from the ruins. I wonder if there's any chance of a treasure being buried down there?"

"Maybe. However, we shall know in a few minutes, for

we're getting close to the place whence the smoke comes from."

The grass was so thick that their feet made hardly any sound.

They soon reached the edge of a clearing, in the center of which a bright fire was burning.

Above the fire, suspended by a chain, secured to the crotch of three stout poles, in gipsy fashion, was a pot-bellied kettle, which exhaled the odor of tar.

Along one side of the clearing a rude shed had been built with a counter, evidently erected to furnish liquid refreshments for picnickers.

The shed was apparently not finished for a roll of roofing cloth was lying on the counter.

It was not the fire, nor the shed that attracted the surprised attention of Joe and his companion, but the animated picture before them.

Four men, with handkerchiefs tied across their faces under their eyes, were in the clearing, three of them standing at the kettle, one of whom was stirring the contents of the vessel with a stick.

The fourth man was shaking his fist at two boys who were tied to a tree, back to back.

Joe and Bob recognized the boys as Brice and Hen.

Both of them looked the picture of hopeless misery.

They were not only tied, but gagged as well.

In spite of his handkerchief disguise, Joe recognized the man before them as Jim Brady.

And the others were evidently the three factory workers who had deemed it wise to accompany him into hiding from the Hillsdale police.

That the men had captured the two boys was evident, and that they intended to do something unpleasant to them was also clear.

That something was suggested by the bolster in Brady's hand and the kettle of boiling tar.

Brice and Hen were in a strenuous predicament.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RESCUE.

The four ruffians were so intent on the business in hand that they did not take notice of the approach of Joe and Bob.

The two mill boys were so surprised at the spectacle presented to their gaze that they stopped in the shadow of the trees and looked upon the four active and two passive actors in the tragedy that was on the tapis.

"I'll fix you two young skunks," roared Brady. "You put on a lot of airs at the mill 'cause your dads are the bosses of the ranch. Well, we gave them a dose of medicine, and now it's your turn. You'll go home lookin' like a couple of digger Indians, and it will take a lot of scrubbin' to put you right again."

"That's Jim Brady!" whispered Bob to Joe.

"I know it," returned the boss of the mill.

"Those chaps are going to tar and feather Brice and Hen."

"We must prevent it," said Joe.

"Prevent it!" cried Bob. "What can we do against four of them?"

"We must try, at any rate. It would be cowardly for us to hang back and let these ruffians torture Brice and Hen."

The fire blazed under the tar kettle and the preparations were rapidly progressing.

Joe and Bob could hardly be supposed to take any deep interest in the prisoners' fate.

Certainly, in Joe's case, Brice and Hen had done all they could to get him discharged from the mill, and when that seemed to have been accomplished they were mean enough to gloat over him in an ostentatious way so that he could understand how delighted they were at his misfortune.

Nevertheless, Joe believed in returning good for evil, and he practiced what he believed.

If they failed they would have the knowledge that they had at least made the best effort they could.

The question was, how were they to turn the trick on the enemy?

Four stout men, bent on business, were a heavy handicap to overcome.

"Is the tar ready?" asked Brady at that moment.

"Looks as if it was, but I reckon it's too hot to apply to

their backs. It would take all the skin off 'em," said the man who was stirring the compound.

"What do we care? It ain't our skin," retorted Brady.

"I'm afraid there'll be the dickens to pay over it."

"If we're caught we might as well be hung for sheep as lambs. It will be a lot of satisfaction to me to get back at them."

The speaker came forward and looked into the kettle.

"It will do," he said. "Take it off the fire and we'll let it cool a bit, then we'll smear it over their clothes and on their hands, and give them a coat of feathers. I wish I could see the sensation they'll create when they get back to town lookin' like a pair of half-plucked fowl."

Brady laughed at the picture his words presented to his mind's eye, and the other men grinned.

The kettle was removed from the fire and the blaze allowed to burn itself out.

"Say, Downey, you stay here and watch those roosters while we go over to the house and take a drink. We'll give you a chance when we come back," said Brady.

Joe's heart began to beat with satisfaction.

If three of them were going off for a few minutes, he and Bob could take advantage of their absence to down the watcher and free the prisoners.

Gripping Bob by the arm he pulled his companion back among the trees, that their presence might not be discovered.

"As soon as Brady and the pair who are going off with him for a drink have gone a few minutes we'll take the watcher by surprise and release Brice and Hen," said Joe.

"All right," replied Bob. "I'm with you. We can easily handle one man, but we mustn't let him yell out, or the others will come running back to see what the trouble is."

By this time Brady and his companions had started off and were soon out of sight.

Brice and Hen were very much frightened at the prospect before them, and fairly shivered in their shoes.

Joe allowed about five minutes to elapse and then he thought it would be safe to jump on the watcher.

"Come on, Bob, we'll move around and approach him from behind," he said.

This brought them facing Brice, who saw them issue cautiously from the shelter of the trees.

Instead of remaining quiet he almost spoilt the surprise by making frantic efforts to appeal to the newcomers to save him.

The watcher, however, did not suspect the true reason for his actions, but thought he was trying to free himself.

"Be quiet," he growled.

The next moment Joe caught him around the neck with a strangle hold, while Bob tripped him up.

He fell heavily on the ground and the two boys jumped on him and held him down.

"Now gag him," said Joe.

Bob undid the handkerchief disguise and tied it tightly across his mouth.

"Hold him down while I free Brice and Hen," said Joe.

He pulled out his jack-knife and soon had the two prisoners free.

"We're much obliged to you, Joe Garland," said Brice, who felt very humble at that moment. "You've saved us from being tarred and feathered by those four rascals. My father will fix them when he hears about how they treated us."

"You're welcome, Brice. Now we'll tie this chap to the tree and leave him for his friends to release. Where is your boat?"

"Over yonder," replied Brice.

"You'd better lose no time in returning to her and putting off as soon as we have triced this fellow up," said Joe.

The man, whom they all recognized as a loafer named Downey, was soon made a prisoner to the tree in spite of his struggles, and there they left him.

The four boys went part of the way to the shore together.

"You fellows have done us a good turn," said Brice, "and we won't forget it, will we, Hen?"

"No," replied his crony.

Joe hoped they wouldn't, but he had his doubts.

"We haven't treated you well, Garland, but henceforth we'll be friends," went on Brice, who was in a penitent mood.

"My father says you're a fine chap, and I guess he's right. Keep solid with him and he'll push you ahead. Are you fellows going that way? You have a boat down there?"

"We have a sailboat tied to the shore. Hurry on, now, for you haven't any time to lose," said Joe.

The boys parted company, and Joe and Bob were soon pushing out into the bay.

They presently caught sight of Brice's yacht shooting out of a little cove.

CHAPTER XII.

OFF SHORE.

Somewhat to Joe's surprise Brice behaved pretty decent when he met him next day on the street.

Brice stopped him and said his father had been very angry when he told him about the indignity to which he and Hen had been subjected on the island.

"He notified the police at once that Jim Brady and the other three mill hands could be found on the island, and a boat with several officers went down there to arrest them. I haven't heard yet if the fellows are in jail, but they are bound to be soon, and then they'll get all that's coming to them," said Brice.

"They deserve it," replied Joe.

"It's a wonder you fellows would take the trouble and the risk of doing anything for us, as we've not been good friends," said Brice. "Some chaps would have been delighted to have seen us in a hobble, and I would have enjoyed the program these fellows were going to carry out."

"You and Hen haven't treated me very generously. I'll admit," returned Joe, "but I never hold a grudge against an enemy when he's in trouble."

"We won't be enemies any more. I'll do all I can to help you along at the mill after this. Father says you're a whole lot above an ordinary mill worker, and he's going to make you foreman of Room B, commencing to-morrow. He has sent word to Mr. Parker to make the change in the morning. You'll get more money and will be the boss of the room."

That piece of information was a pleasant surprise for Joe, and he could hardly believe it, but Brice assured him it was the truth.

He told his mother and sister about it when he got home and they were delighted to hear that he was going to be advanced.

He knew that the regular foreman of Room B was sick in the hospital, and had been away three weeks, and that a substitute was filling his shoes.

Joe went to work as usual on his old job at a loom.

About half-past nine the superintendent came upstairs and called to Joe to follow him.

He took the boss of the mill into Room B and told the acting foreman that he could go back to his regular work.

Joe was then officially declared the head of Room B.

His advancement was well received by the employees of the room, particularly by the girls, and he started right in to show that he was able to fill the bill.

The capture of Brice and Hen on the island on Saturday afternoon, and their narrow escape from tarring and feathering at the hands of Jim Brady and his three companions in exile, was published in that morning's Times, and, of course, was noted by many of the workers of the mill who took that newspaper.

The fact that Joe and Bob played in the rescue of the sons of the president and the superintendent of the mill was duly chronicled and caused considerable talk among the operatives, who knew how badly Brice and Hen had treated Joe.

When Joe came home that afternoon from work he found a package which had been left for him.

Opening it he found a letter and a small box bearing the initials of the late foreman of Room B.

The letter was from Squire Beckley, begging Joe to accept the enclosed gold watch and chain as a special evidence of his appreciation for having saved him from the hands of Brady and his crew.

The watch was a handsome one, and with the chain was probably worth all of \$75.

Joe was delighted with it and he showed it to his mother, sister and Bob with considerable pride.

His name was engraved on the outside of the back cover, and on the inside front cover was engraved in script, "From Squire Beckley to Joseph Garland," with the date.

"Things seem to be coming your way now, Joe," said Bob.

"Well, I'm not kidding because they are," laughed the boss of the mill.

On the following afternoon a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Hillsdale Cotton Mill Co. was held, and Squire Beckley laid before them the matter of the bomb explosion.

He said that Joe Garland, one of their smartest employees, had saved the engine-house from destruction and he thought he was entitled to a reward in recognition of the service.

The directors agreed with him, and the sum of \$250 was voted to be presented to the boy.

Accordingly, a check to his order was made out for that sum, signed by the president and the treasurer and sent to Joe, with a letter expressing the company's thanks.

Of course, Joe was greatly pleased with the place of good fortune.

He had managed to save \$100 during his three years' service in the mill, and this additional sum made him worth \$350.

Several days passed away and Joe got on fine in his new position as foreman of Room B.

Saturday afternoon came around again and he and Bob decided to take another trip on the bay.

They were not able to start this time until five o'clock, so as they could not very well get back in time for supper they took a lunch with them—some meat sandwiches and half of an apple pie.

"Keep supper in the oven for us, mother," said Joe. "We'll be back about nine o'clock."

They went down to the wharf and embarked.

It was a fine afternoon and all went well with them, all they passed out of the harbor on to the ocean, and then the wind gradually dropped to a dead calm, leaving them floating offshore with the ebb tide and unable to do a thing to help them back.

"We're likely to be out half of the night if this calm holds," said Bob. "And we may drift over all mill's offshore."

"The calm won't hold more than an hour. By that time we are likely to have more wind than we want," replied Joe.

"How do you make that out?"

"I'm your face around to the southeast and you'll see a storm breeder."

"That cloud?" cried Bob. "Well, it isn't much bigger than your hand. That doesn't amount to anything with such a fine sunset."

"That cloud will grow rapidly, you'll see. It's the advance of a southeast gale. If it catches us out here, as it's likely to from present indications, we will stand a fine chance of driving ashore on the rocks, and that may mean our finish."

"How do you know that cloud is the forerunner of a gale?"

"Do you see those white streaks, Bob, in the sky?"

"Sure."

"Those are called sea'streaks, and they tell us that a severe wind and plenty of it. They usually always show up that way right before a heavy blow."

"You seem to know considerable about the weather, don't you?" said Bob.

"I've picked up these things from the fishermen, and I've never known them to fail."

The boat rolled slightly as it rode the crests of a long and measured undulation of the surface.

There was no apparent cause for this undulation, but Joe said it was produced maybe a hundred miles away by the action of the waves under a high wind.

"That wind is coming from the south, and it's likely to be full force by the time we get out. By that time we may be a good way offshore, but when it comes well on to us we may be in a bad way. If we get out of the bay before it comes, from going ashore on the island we may escape all right with nothing more serious than a wetting."

Bob didn't like the outlook as indicated by Joe, and said so.

Flourishing as they were in a somewhat adverse current, in the last rays of the setting sun, with the wind blowing all around them, it seemed very likely that they were coming so soon, but when he looked at the weather again he was obliged to admit that the cloud was of a small size, and that it had a most peculiar shape.

"I don't think for a minute," he said, "that it's a storm. What the sailors do, isn't it, is a mistake?"

"Go on and with it if you think you can force a way. I wait us into the bay ahead of the storm," said Joe. "I think

the best thing we can do is to eat our lunch, and after that take a couple of reefs in the mainsail, so as to be ready when the time comes. The coast will be a leeshore to-night, and the coast guard will have no cinch patrolling the beaches."

The lunch-basket was brought out of the cabin and the boys made short work of the sandwiches and pie.

By that time it was dusk, and they set to work on the mainsail.

The black cloud now covered about a third of the sky, blotting out the faint light of the stars as it advanced.

They sat and watched the cloud spread over the heavens and noted the flashes of lightning and the distant rumble of thunder.

At last puffs of wind struck the sail and the boat worked her head around until her bows pointed dead for the mouth of the bay.

Finally, with a hoarse roar, the storm hit them.

The rain came down in sheets at a sharp angle and away dashed the catboat, like a frightened bird.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BURGLARY.

Inside of a couple of minutes the boys were drenched through to the skin.

Dense darkness reigned all around them except when the seascape was lit up by frequent flashes of lightning.

These flashes showed them the coast and the entrance to the harbor.

"We're lucky!" shouted Joe. "We are driving straight in."

He kept the boat's head just right, and almost before Bob knew they were so close in the boat was shooting through the mouth of the harbor.

Then Joe had to alter their course in order to avoid the island, which lay ahead, but the wind was so heavy that this deviation sent the boat away over on her port side, with the end of the boom tearing through the water.

Suddenly the wind veered around and the boat shot straight for the western shore of the bay.

Joe worked the rudder, little by little, to avoid the new peril that threatened them, but his experience was not equal to the emergency.

He dared not bring her around to a safe course, for the boat would have capized in a moment.

He had to let her go the best way she would run, and that meant that they were bound to go ashore at some point.

They were close inshore when a brilliant flash of lightning showed a creek straight ahead.

In another minute they shot into it and glided on up till the boat grounded on shore with no great shock.

"Saved!" cried Bob, as Joe let the reefed mainsail down with a run.

There was no need of mooring the craft, for she had taken enough ground to held her till the flood tide came in some hours later.

The boys took shelter in the cabin and started a fire in the small stove which was set into the bows for cooking purposes.

Then they took off their clothes and, after wringing out the water, hung them up near the stove in which they kept a roaring blaze.

Outside the storm roared in from the sea.

"What time is it, Joe?" asked Bob.

"Eight o'clock," replied Joe, after looking at his silver watch, for he only carried his new gold one when he wore his good clothes.

They found a pack of playing cards in a locker and, each wrapped in a blanket, sat down on the floor and played game after game of euchre.

Time wore on and still the storm continued.

They played till eleven o'clock, and as the storm was still on they turned in on the bunks after replenishing the fire with the last of the fuel, and turning their garments around so as to dry on the other side.

Lulled by the gale, they were soon asleep.

Along about half-past one in the morning Joe woke up.

This was something unusual for the boy, but probably he did not sleep as well in a strange bed, or because the fire had

made the little cabin very stuffy, and Joe was accustomed to a well-ventilated room.

At any rate, he woke up and for a moment or two seemed to be puzzled by his surroundings.

The howl of the storm was no longer in the air.

There wasn't a sound but the lap of the water alongside.

Joe got up and felt of his clothes.

They were perfectly dry and he put on his undershirt.

Then with the blanket around him he went to the sliding door, pushed it half-way open and looked out.

The night was intensely dark, and the air seemed quite still after the recent elemental uproar.

He was about to return to bed when he heard voices of men close by.

They were standing on the other side of the bushes which screened the boat.

He recognized the voice of Jim Brady as one.

Wondering what the rascals were up to at that hour in the morning, Joe listened intently.

"The house is only a few steps from here," he heard Brady say. "We'll break in through one of the cellar windows. The old maids sleep on the second floor and the two servants at the top of the house. The plate is kept in a sandalwood chest in the old maids' bedroom. We won't be able to get into it without wakin' them up, but we'll gag and bind them in bed and then we can do as we please. After we get hold of the stuff we'll make tracks out of this neighborhood for good."

There was some further talk about the project the rascals had on hand for the night, then they moved away, and their receding voices told Joe the direction they were going.

"I must queer their game," he muttered.

He hurried into his clothes, and leaving Bob sleeping like a top he sprang on shore and followed the direction he judged the men had taken.

Inside of five minutes he saw a dark object before him, which soon shaped itself into a substantial three-story frame house, surrounded by an extensive ground that sloped down to the creek.

Close by was a carriage-house, and near that a big barn.

There were also two or three small outbuildings.

Joe walked cautiously up to the house, but saw no signs of the men.

He soon found a window which had been tampered with.

The iron bars, supposed to protect it, had been removed by forcing the bottom stone out of place.

It was an old house and the crumbling state of the mortar had enabled the burglars to make easy work of the job.

The window had then been forced, breaking the catch that held it.

It was now open, and the men had clearly got in that way.

Joe debated with himself what he should do.

He finally decided to enter the house himself and put the rascals to flight, if he could do so without getting caught himself.

So he crawled in through the window and felt his way to the cellar stairs.

The door at the head of the flight stood open, and admitted him into a small entry adjoining the kitchen.

He listened for some sound that would tell him where the rascals were, but he heard nothing.

They were either in the front of the house on that floor or upstairs.

All was dark around him and he hardly knew which way to turn.

At a venture he opened the first door he felt in the gloom.

That let him into a large room.

He pulled out a small match-safe he carried and struck a light.

Then he saw that he was in the kitchen of the house—a spacious, low-ceilinged apartment, as large as four ordinary modern kitchens.

Joe took a candle off a shelf and lit it.

Then he looked around for something that would answer the purpose he had in view.

Finally he found a short hickory club in one of the closets.

"This will do. It will keep a man at arm's length, all right. Now I'll get after those chaps. I'll bet they're upstairs working at that sandalwood chest, in which Brady said the family plate was kept. That's the plunder they're after. I wonder how they learned about it?"

He put out the light, but left the candle on the end of the table where he could easily find it again if he needed it.

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From the kitchen he made his way to the dark and deserted dining-room, also low-ceilinged and finished in solid woodwork.

Thence into the main hall, where he found a wide, carpeted stairway leading to the second floor.

The sitting-room lay between the dining-room and the front of the house, but Joe didn't go in there.

On the other side of the hall was the reception parlor, seldom used, and into this room Joe merely looked to make sure the rascals were not there.

Then with the club clutched tightly in his right hand, ready for business, he took his way upstairs, the thick-carpet deadening his footfalls.

He stopped to listen at the head of the stairs, and at first heard no sound that would show the presence of the intruders.

"Maybe they're not in the house, after all," he thought. "Still they must be, for the forced cellar window shows that they have made an entrance."

At that moment he heard a crash which came from the direction of the front room.

"Ah! they're in there, breaking open the plate chest, just as I supposed they would be doing," he muttered.

He glided to the door of the room and opened it softly.

It was the bedroom of the two old maiden sisters.

No bed was in sight, however, but a curtained alcove indicated where it was.

The room was well furnished in old-fashioned style.

The plate chest was in the corner opposite the alcove, and working at it Joe saw Jim Brady and his three pals.

CHAPTER XIV.**JOE MAKES A BOLD CAPTURE.**

Brady had a small crowbar in his hands, and he had smashed part of the cover of the chest in his efforts to pry it open.

He was in the act of finishing the job when Joe looked into the room.

The two female servants slept in the back part of the floor above, and they calculated that whatever sounds they made would not reach their sleeping ears.

The coachman-gardener and a boy who worked around the place slept in a room over the carriage-house, and of them the burglars had no fear whatever.

The maiden sisters, who had been awakened by their appearance in the room, had first terrorized, then bound and gagged, so there appeared to be no obstacle to the success of their nefarious undertaking.

But it is the unexpected that always happens—and Joe, the boss of the mill, was the unexpected factor which brought their rascally scheme to naught.

As he looked at the men, entirely off their guard, it struck him that a sudden dash upon them, taking them by surprise, and a skilful wielding of the club before they could pull themselves together to offer a suitable defense, would spoil their game and save the old maids from being robbed of their precious plate.

As this plan occurred to Joe, Brady forced the rest of the cover open.

Dropping the crowbar, the men stood for a moment gazing down at the solid silverware that lay in neat order in the chest.

"This will set us on our feet," said Brady. "It must be worth several thousand dollars, for every piece is solid silver, and there are more'n a hundred pieces in this box. I call this prime luck."

As he spoke, Joe, who had decided to creep upon them instead of making a rush, was approaching them from behind.

The first intimation they had that anything was wrong was when Joe swung his club and Brady went down, like a stricken ox across the chest, and lay there quite motionless.

With exclamations of consternation the others turned to find the boy menacing them with his club in one hand and the crowbar, which he had picked up, in the other.

"It's Joe Garland!" exclaimed Downey.

"Yes, it's Joe Garland, and you're all pinched!" said the boss of the mill.

"Pinched!" gasped the three.

"Yes. The police will be upstairs in a minute," bluffed Joe.

At that moment he caught sight of the butt of a revolver sticking out of Brady's hip-pocket.

This was the only weapon the bunch had, and Brady had used it to intimidate the maiden sisters.

Joe dropped the crowbar and pulled the weapon out of the rascal's pocket.

"Now, then," he said, covering them with the gun, "you'd better give up without making any further trouble."

"Give us a chance, Joe."

"You're not entitled to any. Here you are burglarizing a house in the small hours of the morning, and because you're caught with the goods you want me to wink at your crime and let you sneak. No, sir; the police have been looking for you ever since the afternoon when you assaulted Squire Beckley and Mr. Parker. I suppose you don't know anything about the bomb affair?"

"Jim Brady did that," said Downey.

"That's what the mill people believe, and he'll be brought to book for it. Now just back up against that wall and hold up your hands."

He gave a quick glance in the direction of the alcove and

saw the two women lying gagged in the bed, watching him with staring eyes.

His object was to free one of them, at any rate, so she could arouse the help on the floor above.

Reaching the alcove, he shifted the revolver to his left hand and backing against the bed pulled the gags from the mouths of both the old maids.

"Save us! oh, save us and our property!" cried the old ladies, in a breath.

"That's what I'm doing, ladies," replied Joe. "I suppose your arms are tied under the bedclothes?" he added.

"Yes," replied the younger of the two sisters.

"Be patient a moment and I'll cut you loose," replied Joe, watching the three men closely, for they were consulting together, with their arms up, and the boy suspected that they were figuring on making a dash for the door of the room in an effort to escape.

He pulled out his jack-knife and opened the big blade with his teeth.

As he started to feel for the cord that bound the nearest old maid's hands the rascals sprang forward, with one accord, and made for the door.

Dropping the knife, Joe switched the revolver into his right hand and fired at the legs of the foremost rascal.

The bullet struck him in the thigh and he fell to the floor.

The other two fell over him and went sprawling.

Before they could recover, Joe was on them and ordered the two unwounded men back to the wall, in tones so resolute that they sullenly obeyed.

The report awoke the servants at the top of the house and they rushed out into the upper landing.

Joe heard them and called to them to come down.

They did so after some hesitation, for they did not recognize the boy's tones.

Joe stood at the open door, watching the prisoners.

The two servants held back until he reassured them, in a moment.

"Come in here and help your mistresses," said Joe.

The women advanced till they saw the wounded man groaning on the floor and the other two standing against the wall, then they stopped, with an exclamation of fear.

"Don't be afraid," said Joe. "I'll protect you. Your mistresses are bound in their bed. Go into the alcove and release them."

The servants obeyed his directions, and soon released the old maids, who flutteringly explained the situation enough for the servants to understand.

The cook was directed to put on a wrapper and go and arouse the gardener and the boy.

The other woman, who was a general maid, closed the curtains of the alcove and waited for her mistresses to dress so they could meet their young protector.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

The youngest of the maiden sisters, whose age was about fifty, made her appearance first and came up to Joe, whom she proceeded to thank for coming to their assistance, and whose pluck she praised for capturing the four rascals.

Joe told the lady, whose name was Mary Peabody, who the four scoundrels were, and then introduced himself.

Miss Peabody immediately remembered seeing his name in the papers in connection with the strike at the mill, and the bomb explosion, and as he had been highly commended by the press for pluck and presence of mind, the maiden lady felt that his presence in the house was as good as if the police were there.

The gardener and the boy now came to the room, brought by the cook, and with their help the prisoners were all secured so they could not get away.

The boy was then sent to town on horseback to bring the police in a wagon to take charge of the much-wanted prisoners.

It was not till daylight, after the police had arrived and taken off the rascals, that Joe was able to return to the boat in the creek.

He found Bob still sleeping peacefully, wholly ignorant of the exciting adventure through which his friend had passed since the storm died away.

Joe did not disturb him, as it was early yet, but lay down himself, without removing his clothes, to snatch a couple of hours' repose before they started back for town.

Bob woke up about seven, and thinking Joe had slept all night, like himself, aroused him.

"Get a move on, old man," he said. "The tide is up and we must get the boat afloat and hike to town to relieve the anxiety of your people."

It was not till they were sailing down the creek and out into the bay and Joe began telling his companion about the stirring events of the early morning.

To say that Bob was astonished would scarcely describe his feelings.

The boys found Mrs. Garland and Kittie in a great stew over their all-night absence, for they had feared something had happened to them during the storm.

Joe related the incidents of their trip, admitting that they were lucky to come out as well as they did, not even losing their boat.

Then he told how he had saved the home of the Misses Peabody from being robbed, and captured the four burglars himself, without help.

They were surprised to learn that the rascals were the four loafers so badly wanted by the police.

A policeman called for him at ten o'clock to attend the magistrate's court where Brady and his pals were to be examined.

Squire Beckley and Mr. Parker were in court to press the charges of assault and malicious mischief, and also to try and fasten the guilt of the bomb explosion on Jim Brady.

The two old maids were present, also, to charge the men with attempted burglary.

Joe was the star witness on all the charges, and the spectators were much interested in his story.

The prisoners were held for regular trial by the magistrate.

Ultimately, Downey was allowed to turn State's evidence in order to convict Brady of the bomb explosion.

Brady got twenty years, and the others, except Downey, ten years.

Downey got three, and then sentence was suspended in his case, and he was let go free, with a warning that if he was arrested and convicted of another crime within that time he would have to serve two sentences.

The old Misses Peabody invited Joe to call on them the following Sunday and take dinner.

He accepted the invitation.

"Mr. Garland," said Miss Mary, after dinner. "we are going to present you with an evidence of our appreciation of your valuable services. It is the deed, made out in your mother's name as trustee for you till you are of age, of the island in the bay. We consider that will prove a fortune to you if you use it right, and you have certainly won it by your remarkable pluck which you exerted in our behalf. We are getting old and will never be able to make any use of it. The two nieces who are our heirs will find this property on which we live ample to satisfy their wishes, so we are not robbing them by presenting the island to you."

With those words, Miss Peabody handed Joe the deed of the island which so many people had cast a longing eye upon.

Joe proved himself a capable foreman of Room B, and when the head of Room A left he was transferred to that, which was a much more important position.

Two years later, Joe, who had been holding down the position of assistant to the superintendent for six months, was suddenly promoted to the post of superintendent upon the sudden death of Adam Parker.

Squire Beckley regarded him as the most capable person to be got at short notice, and Joe soon proved that he could boss the mill in a way to give satisfaction to the company as well as to the employees.

As he had \$1,000 in bank, he bought ten shares of the mill company's stock and thereby became a regular stockholder in the concern, which was an advantage to him.

There was now a big summer hotel on the island, as Mrs. Garland, as trustee, had leased the property to a hotel company for a matter of ten years, at the end of which time it was optional with Joe to renew the lease at a higher rate or to purchase the hotel and lease the whole thing to anybody who offered a satisfactory bid.

In due course, Joe and Nellie Marchant were married.

We may add that Bob married Ellen Dale, and settled down to a happy life in a pretty cottage not far from Joe's home.

Next week's issue will contain "STOCK BROKER DICK; OR, THE BOY WHO BROKE THE WALL STREET MARKET."

FROM ALL POINTS

CALF MISTOOK AN AIRPLANE FOR A CHICKEN HAWK

Thomas Gerloch, farmer, near Redding, Cal., is grieving over the death of what he asserts was the most valuable calf in California. The calf was permitted to roam at will over the farm because it protected the chickens against hawks, says Gerloch.

Every time a hawk would flash down from the sky to grab off a chicken, the calf was on the job, ready to fight off the hawk.

One day lately Lieut. Goodrich, from San Francisco, was flying over the farm in an airplane when his engine went dead, and he was forced to land. The calf, had been watching the great plane, apparently believing it some new sort of hawk, bent on a hen raid.

As the plane landed the calf dashed up. The propeller still was spinning. Before Lieut. Goodrich could leap to the ground and chase the animal away, the calf had butted the machine in the nose.

HIS PITCHER BANK CRACKED FOR \$2,000

When George Mamayie, forty years old, was aroused by a noise in his furnished room at No. 58 Little Street, Brooklyn, N. Y., the other day, he thought of the \$2,000 he had concealed in a water pitcher under the bed and let out a yell. A blow on the head stunned him.

His cry aroused other roomers in the house and they chased to the street two men who had been in Mamayie's room, but lost track of them. Detective Brickley of the Poplar Street Station a short time later met a man in his stocking feet at Washington and Sands Streets and arrested him. He proved to be Joseph Unavich, twenty-three, Mamayie's roommate, but he didn't have the \$2,000, which Mamayie had discovered was gone.

Mamayie, after being treated at the Brooklyn hospital, was able to return home. He and Unavich were employed at the Arbuckle refinery. He said he carried his \$2,000 savings in a bag around his waist in the daytime and always kept it in the old pitcher under the bed at night.

BOOZE WATCHED BY 6 ARMED GUARDS

Guards armed with automatic rifles are keeping constant watch over wine cellars in the homes of wealthy residents of Nassau County, New York. It became known recently. One man, whose summer home is just outside the village of Oyster Bay, has six guards.

Their job is to sit in the wine cellar with the cases and barrels there stored with guns ready.

They work in pairs on eight-hour shifts and get \$75 a month and their board. Two women have been installed in the servants' quarters to cook for them.

Another residence is equipped with a new cellar of reinforced concrete. Entrance is possible only through a 3-inch steel door. There are fourteen barrels in this cellar, and the walls are lined with bottles. Four armed men guard it day and night, although it would take a cracksman some time to break in even if undisturbed.

Positive knowledge is had of where more than \$500,000 worth of liquid cheer is stored in and near Oyster Bay. Estimates are that the alcoholic beverages in cellars thereabouts far exceed that sum.

One man who has a cellar that cost him upward of \$150,000 to stock said yesterday that he would carry two flasks—one of Scotch and one of rye—so that he and his friends would not be entirely parched during necessary separations from their cellars.

CANADA IS NOW MINING EPSOM SALTS

A new industry has been started in Canada, that of mining Epsom salts, writes Felix S. S. Johnson, United States Consul at Kingston, Ontario. The discovery of large deposits of these salts was made a few years ago in British Columbia, but it is only now that they are being marketed to any extent in Canada. The deposits are located in a chain of five lakes near Basque, British Columbia.

The formation of these deposits is particularly interesting. The surface of the salt lake is a mass of hard, white crystal. Slabs of salt are cut out by saws similar to those used in ice harvesting. Underneath this hard crystal is a liquid of the same chemical nature, which, when it oozes up and comes in contact with the sun and air, becomes hard and can be cut into slabs just the same as the top surface. The investigation shows that the deposits are at least forty feet deep, and an analysis by a Government chemist shows that the salts are practically 100 per cent. pure magnesium sulphate.

The lakes are of the basin variety and are in the dry belt, where the combined rain and snow fall does not exceed five inches annually. The deposits are covered with water from six inches to one foot from the last of March until June or July. The hot, dry summer winds evaporate the water very rapidly, and during most of the year the magnesium sulphate may be removed easily. The salts occur in solidified masses of varying shapes and sizes, surrounded by mud rings.

And Consul Jesse H. Johnson writes from Regina, Saskatchewan, describing some newly developed mines of Glauber's salts, of which about 9,000,000 tons are in sight.

Dan, the Delivery Boy

—OR—

The Mysterious House on the Hill

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XIV (continued)

"Aw rats! Since dis ting began you seem to have got de biggest kind of a swelled head. Hain't I yer friend—say?"

"I think you are my friend, Tom."

"Don't yer know I am? Yer might well say yer tink so if you only knowed what I've went troo wit on your account since youse has been gone and, say, dat's no dream."

"What do you mean?"

"Now dat's all right. If you can keep a close mout, den so kin I."

Dan dropped it.

He felt that Tom was just "stringing" him.

This did not suit the driver of 88 at all and he returned to the charge after a few minutes.

"Looker here, Dan, hain't you going to tell a feller nothing?"

"Tom I just can't. I have given my promise not to, so please leave me alone."

"Now dat's all right. I know now for once dat dere's a goil into it. I seen her troo de door. A stunnin' blonde. I admire your taste, but say, when a feller comes almighty near croakin' on his friend's account it comes hard for his friend to throw him down de way you've turned me down—dat I will say."

"Now what on earth do you mean, Kane?"

"Oh, dat's all right. As I said before, if you kin keep a tight mout, den so kin I."

"I've just got to," replied Dan. "You can do as you please."

And that was as far as Tom got with it that day.

He felt mad clear through at what he was pleased to call Dan's stubbornness, so much so in fact that he declined to speak to his mate for the rest of the day.

But this, of course, could not last.

Tom could not have permanently preserved his secret if he had tried.

Next morning on the wagon he went for Dan again and finding him still silent he up and told his own experience enlarging on it all he could.

He had an eager listener if that was any reward.

Dan grew greatly excited.

It seemed to him that here was a case where confidence ought to be exchanged for confidence, so disregarding his promises he opened up and told Tom all—first swearing him to secrecy.

He was half sorry right away after he had done it; but we must say we think he did the right thing under the circumstances.

Tom listened with intense interests, of course.

But for what had happened to himself it is safe to say that he never would have believed Dan's story. As it was he could not doubt.

"An' so you got de same dope!" he cried. "It's wonderful, but what do you 'spose dey ever took you to dem places for, Dan?"

"I'm sure I'll never tell you, Tom," was the reply, "but one thing is also sure; this Professor those two fellows talked about must be the man I saw up there who wears the mask."

"I believe it. Dey mean to do him, Dan, dose two guys what tried to do me."

"And they will succeed. I'm afraid he keeps touched up all the time, poor man. Something ought to be done."

"Sure dere ought, but who's to do it unless it's you and me? Shall we go to de police?"

"I don't believe it would be the slightest use—do you?"

"No, I don't. Dey wouldn't never believe us."

"Then what can we do? Go to that house?"

"It looks to me like dat. You know I was told dat Professor Stevenson lived into it. He must be de man dey talked about. He ought to be warned."

"He certainly ought."

"We might write him a letter."

"I don't like that. Suppose I go to the other house and try to see Mrs. Billup and Jean?"

"Dat would be all right if dey live dere."

"And I am sure I don't know whether they do or not. All the same I'm going to try it."

"Don't go alone, Dan."

"But I don't know whether they would like to have me bring you along, Tom."

"Let's stick togedder. Two of us is less liable to get into trouble dan one."

They continued the discussion during the entire day, these boys.

Nothing could be done till night, however, for they could not desert the delivery wagon and as it happened their route lay in another direction that day.

The final decision was that they should go together after the day's work was over and see what could be done to get at Dan's mysterious friends.

So about eight o'clock the two boys presented themselves at the old house at the edge of the hollow.

Here all was dark and the ringing of the bell many times repeated brought no response.

"It's no use," declared Tom. "Dem ladies is only here when dey choose to come, dat's one sure t'ing."

"We have got to go around to de Professor's house."

This seemed more risky, but as apparently there was no other way, Dan yielded.

So they went around the block and stood for a moment sizing up the big house.

Here a light burned in one of the windows on the second floor, but the rest of the house was dark.

"We may as well make a try for it, Tom," said Dan. "It's now or never. I'm going to ring the bell."

"All right, but we must look out for ourselves if one of them fellers come to de door."

"Should you know them again?"

"Sure I should! Do you t'ink I'd ever foget 'em after what dey done to me?"

They ascended the steps and Dan pulled the bell. It sounded very loud but it brought no response.

Dan tried it again and this time the window behind which the light burned was raised and a man looked out.

"Dat's Bart!" breathed Tom, looking up. "Dat's de blame mut, surest t'ing."

"Hello, down there! What do you fellows want?" Bart called.

"To see Professor Stevenson; is he in?" replied Dan.

"What do you want to see him about?"

"Private business."

"He isn't home. Beat it!"

Slam went the window and the shade was hastily drawn down.

"Dat's de time we don't get nowhere," remarked Tom.

"Do you think he knew you?" question Dan.

"How can I tell whether he did or not? What ought we to do? Dey may be doing de old guy up now."

It was certainly a problem.

Dan said something about sneaking in by way of the iron door.

"Dat would be crazy," declared Tom. "If dem two muts once got hold of us, dey'd dope us to det surest t'ing you know. I think we better go to de stationhouse."

"Oh, they would never listen to us, Tom. Like enough they would lock us up into the bargain."

Tom was much of the same opinion.

Now while this was going on the boys had remained standing on the steps.

Perhaps they were watched; at all events the door was now suddenly thrown open and a man darted out.

Again it was Bart.

"What! Still here! Didn't I tell you to beat it?" he cried.

And as he spoke he drew a revolver and waved it in the air.

It is not probable that he really meant to shoot, but Dan and Tom were taking no chances.

They took to their heels and ran for their lives.

It was not until they reached the avenue that the boys checked their speed.

"Hold up!" panted Dan, then. "He isn't following us. We are only making fools of ourselves."

"Oh, I don't know," replied Tom. "If you had went troo wit what I did wit dat feller you wouldn't feel like taking no chances. But say, what's to be done now?"

"I'll be blest if I know, Tom."

"Mebbe Mrs. Billup doesn't live in that house. She might be in the directory somewhere else. Suppose we get over onto Broadway and see if we can't find a directory."

This suggestion sounded good to Tom and they started to carry it out.

After some trouble, a directory was discovered and the search was made.

The name was such an uncommon one that Dan did not anticipate any difficulty in picking out the particular Mrs. Billup for he happened to have been told that her first name was Susan.

And so it proved.

The directory furnished the information that Billup, Susan, widow, lived at the address of the old house at the head of the hollow.

It was a case of swinging around the circle.

Here the boys were just where they started out.

"If she does live there then she must be home some time," declared Dan. "Perhaps she was out when we were there before, Tom, and she may be in now. Let's try it again for luck."

Tom had no objection to offer, for, aside from helping Dan to sound the warning in the case of the mysterious professor, he had his own private grudge to satisfy against Billy and Bart.

So back to the old house they went and this time it looked more like success, for where all had been dark before, a light now burned in the upper windows.

But when Dan pulled the bell no answer was returned.

"Hold on!" cried Tom. "I'll give her de holler."

Putting his hand to his mouth he yelled:

"Billup! Delivery boy! Mammoth store!"

CHAPTER XV.

Mrs. Billup Takes a Hand In the Game.

Tom Kane had a voice like a fog horn. His shout might have been heard half the length of the block. And as he gave it Dan rang the bell again.

This time it was success.

In a minute a light appeared in the hall and presently the door was opened on a chain.

Jean, wearing a blue kimono with her yellow hair done up in curl papers, looked out.

"Is it really you, Dan, making all that noise?" she demanded, pettishly. "And who is this with you? You do very wrong to disturb us so."

"Wait," said Dan. "Something has happened. I must see your mother at once."

"She's in bed," replied Jean, "and she is supposed to be asleep, though I doubt if she is with all the noise you have been making."

"Don't be cross, Jean," said Dan, addressing the girl as he had been told to do. "This is really serious."

(To be continued.)

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

OPAL FEAR VANISHES

The superstition associating the opal with bad luck is rapidly disappearing, according to dealers, and this beautiful gem is now in the high tide of popularity.

Few people realize the tremendous demand appearing for Australian opals. The world has never seen more gorgeous gems than the fire opals mined in the Lightning Ridge district of New South Wales which flush with fire in all the colors of the rainbow. For years the finest opals in these fields were gobbled by representatives of London and their European agents in the field.

Competition is so spirited that it has placed gem opals in the same class as most precious stones as far as price is concerned. They bring from \$200 to \$2,000 apiece and are bought up so rapidly that the supply is not equal to the demand.

BAKING BY ELECTRICITY

The ordinary rise in the prices of fuel caused by the war has considerably furthered baking by electricity, although a great many electric bake ovens existed in Norway, Sweden and Switzerland before the outbreak of hostilities. The cheapness of coal at that time was not conducive to the bakeries taking up electric baking, in spite of the fact that in those countries which possess water power, baking by electricity is of considerable economic importance, as the employment of electric ovens permits the utilization of superfluous electric energy which usually cannot be made use of during the night. The night energy can be supplied by hydroelectric power stations at such cheap rates as to make the use of electric ovens much more economical than those heated by coal or steam.

FIREPROOF TIMBER PROCESS PATENTED

A process has been made public in England by which timber is made fireproof. A company has been formed, known as the Timber Fireproofing Company, which claims that the use of the process will tend to avoid the risk of fire in houses built of wood.

The process known as the oxylene fireproofing process consists of submitting the wood in a closed cylinder to a steaming and vacuum treatment, which removes the air moisture in the pores of the wood and vaporizes the sap water. The wood is then impregnated under hydraulic pressure with a solution of fire-resisting chemicals, which replace the elements driven out by the preliminary treatment. Finally the water of the solution is dried off, and the chemicals in minute crystal form remain embodied in the fibres.

The effect of this treatment is explained as being

that on the application of heat the crystals expand and form a glossy coating, which excludes the oxygen of the air and prevents its combination with wood, thus rendering flame an impossibility. The higher the temperature, the more the crystals expand, and though in time the chemical action of each crystal becomes exhausted and the wood becomes charred fresh crystals come into play, and though the wood may eventually be charred completely through, no flame will be generated.

Wood treated this way does not differ in appearance from wood that has not been treated, and it is claimed that it does not deteriorate, and is not affected by atmospheric conditions.

SEA LEATHER WILL CUT THE COST OF FOOTWEAR

Everybody is painfully aware of the scarcity and high price of leather. The war, of course, took a heavy direct toll of the leather production of the world and in addition indirectly reduced the supplies by the steady diminution of the world's flocks and herds from which our leather usually comes.

The sea, however, said a British writer, holds an almost inexhaustible source of leather in the larger aquatic creatures—whales, sharks, porpoises, dog-fish, the ray or devil-fish, the saw-fish, and some others. We are already in this country acquainted with certain forms of whale and porpoise leather.

The well-known "Belgua" belting is obtained from the white whale, an animal which attains a length of over 18 feet, with a girth of as much as 12 feet. There have, however, been difficulties in the way of utilizing these sources on any large scale, for the production of leather suitable for general purposes.

The shagreen or outer coating of the skin of the shark, for example as well as those of the ray and of the dog-fish, is a horny structure frequently so hard that it is difficult to grind it off, while grinding, if carried far enough to remove it entirely, results in partial destruction of the skin proper.

Necessity, however, has again proved the mother of invention and chemical means have been devised by which this horny material may be successfully removed; while improvements in lining now permit that part of the process of tanning to be carried through without injury to the skin. A further step has succeeded in removing the fishy odor which would otherwise remain in the finished product. In the circumstances it is not surprising to learn that new stations for the treatment of these sea products are being established on the southern Atlantic shores of the United States, where many of the creatures named abound.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

HONOLULU TO HAVE \$1,000,000 BUILDING

A \$1,000,000 contract for the construction of a Federal building here has been secured by Robert Atkinson, president of the Hawaiian Contracting Company. Mr. Atkinson recently returned from Washington, D. C., where he secured the contract, outbidding the Salt Lake Construction Company.

Hawaii has been waiting ten years for the Federal building, which will house the Federal courts, post office, internal revenue and customs departments of the Government here.

It was announced that work would commence at once on the excavation for the foundation of the building, to be located directly opposite the Iolani Palace of the Kamehameha dynasty of Hawaiian Kings, now used as the Territorial Government building or capitol.

TOURING ON BOILING LAKE

One of the unusual experiences provided by the New Zealand Government Tourist Bureau for visitors to New Zealand is a launch ride across one of the larger boiling lakes in the thermal region of the North Islands. This lake is called Rotomahana, which is the native Maori name for "warm lake."

As the launch glides across the surface huge clouds of steam rise in the wake of the boat and because of the peculiar opaque green color of the water makes a most weird effect.

For a hundred feet or more from the shore, the water is extremely hot, but in the centre the lake is only lukewarm because of the great depth of the water. Wild ducks frequent the centre of the lake but always seem to know just where to alight with comfort.

BILLY SUNDAY SPEEDS BARLEYCORN TO GRAVE

"Billy" Sunday preached a John Barleycorn funeral service in Norfolk, Va., before an audience of more than 10,000 persons which attended mock obsequies. The ceremony began at the railroad station where the "corpse" in a coffin twenty feet long arrived on "a special train from Milwaukee." Twenty pall bearers placed the coffin on a carriage and marched beside it through the streets to Sunday's tabernacle, while His Satanic Majesty trailed behind in deep mourning and anguish.

At the tabernacle door Sunday met the cortege with a delighted grin. The Devil, wearing a mask and simulating a state of deep dejection, sat with the mourners.

"Good-by, John" said the evangelist at the end of his sermon. "You were God's worst enemy; you were Hell's best friend. I hate you with a perfect hatred; I love to hate you."

25 FIRES SET BY BOY GANG

Three boys in their teens, arrested recently during a fire at No. 462 Knickerbocker Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y., confessed setting twenty-five fires in different parts of Brooklyn in the last three months for the purpose of robbery. The police say they can fix fifty Brooklyn fires in the same period on the trio.

The boys confessed they worked Saturday and Sunday nights, usually at dinner hour, in tenement houses, because there was likely to be plenty of money around at those times. They saturated stuff in the cellar with oil, set fire to it, and when the tenants rushed from the house the boys ran upstairs and grabbed all the money and jewelry lying loose. They told of getting \$33 in one house, \$5 in another and various pieces of jewelry. They spent the money on movies, candy and cigarettes.

PEARL SHORTAGE

Since large pearls are no longer found in the semi-exhausted fisheries of the Orient and the world is confronted with a shortage of one of its most ancient and highly prized gems, dealers in the American market are looking hopefully to the development of the pearl fishing industry in Lower California and on the Venezuelan coast.

The Venezuelan government has begun a close supervision over its pearl fisheries and a conservation of their output. The pearl oyster beds are located at Margarita Island, Cubagua, El Tirano, Pear-lamar, Maracapaná, Macanao and Golfo de las perlas. When Columbus discovered the mainland of South America in 1498, he found the Indians working these beds in the hands of the Spaniards, the pearl coast became famous for its wealth in these gems off the sea. When L'Ollonois, Roc Braziliano and Sir Henry Morgan were sweeping the Spanish Main with the piratical jolly rover at their masthead, the pearl fisheries were frequently plundered.

In the pearling season to-day, 499 vessels and 2,000 divers work along the coast and among the islands. The annual product of Margarita Island alone is valued at \$600,000. An immense pearl with an estimated value of \$100,000 was found at Margarita in 1579 and presented to King Philip of Spain. The Venezuelan pearls are of good orient and color and are noted for their number of baroques or irregularly shaped pearls.

Perhaps the richest pearl fisheries in America lie along the west coast of the Gulf of California from La Paz to the Island of Loreto and around Tiburon across the gulf on the Mexican coast. Pearls are also found in some abundance on both the eastern and western coasts of Mexico, Nicaragua and Puerto Rico. The Pearl Islands off the coast of Panama have been famous for their pearls for centuries.

WAR AGAINST WILD HORSES

By Paul Braddon.

Wild horses have become so numerous on the plains that some of the stockmen in the vicinity of Cheyenne have organized a hunting party whose object will be to thin them out. The hunters are provided with long-range rifles, fleet ponies, and supplies and forage enough to last all winter, and they will endeavor to make a clean job of it. These horses have existed on the plains for many years, but of late they have been increasing very fast. They are quick to scent the approach of foes, fleet as the antelope that may often be seen browsing in security at their side, and as unmanageable as the wind. Native animals when turned loose on the prairie soon become wild, and if allowed to run without being disturbed breed very rapidly. Horses continually break away from their owners and join the wild horses, and this is the reason why stockmen are aroused over the subject. Men who crossed the plains in 1849 encountered many wild horses, and for years afterward they must have increased rather than diminished. Horses stand the winter much better than cattle, and unless the weather is unusually severe will come out fat in the spring.

Every year large numbers of domestic horses escape from the settlers. Some of them are found, but when mares escape they are never reclaimed. In wandering over the plains they encounter the wild bands, and from that time forward are as wild as the others. The wild stallions are the guardians of the bands. Always on sentinel duty, they give the alarm when any enemy approaches. In a moment the stragglers are rounded in, a fleet-footed stallion leads the van, and with others at the flanks away they go in a thundering charge. Nobody has yet been able to overtake them. Sometimes they are killed or shot, but such a thing as heading them off in a race is out of the question.

The range of the wild horses at present extends from Texas to the southern Dakota line. They are more numerous in northern Colorado, Wyoming, and western Nebraska than anywhere else on the plains. On the Republican river, on the divide between the South Platte and the Lodge Pole and the North Platte, and as far east as the heads of the Loup and the Dismal rivers, the horses range at will. Five or six years ago they could be found on the divide between Sidney and Sterling in bunches of fifty or seventy-five, but now a bunch of twenty-five is considered large. Sometimes there is more than one stallion in a band, but one of them is always acknowledged as chief, winning this distinction by many hard fought battles with his rivals. One bunch of eleven horses recently seen near Sidney was entirely composed of stallions, but this is explained on the theory that they were probably driven out of various herds when young, and gradually herded to-

gether as old buffalo bulls were in the habit of doing. From the horse ranch of M. E. Post, about fifteen miles north of this city, nearly two hundred mares have wandered away, and it is believed that at least one-half of them have joined the wild horses.

The wildest horses are compact little animals, weighing from 500 to 1,100 pounds. The majority of them weigh about 800 pounds and stand about fourteen hands high. In color they are usually brown, sorrel, or bay. A gray is seldom seen, unless it is a horse that has strayed away from civilization. Their tails grow long, frequently dragging the ground, but their manes are like those of other horses, and not flowing to the knees as they are represented in some books. The eye, probably from being constantly on the watch, is larger than the eye of the domestic horse, and even when tamed the eye remains a distinctive mark of the horse's origin. Wild horses, when captured and trained, are superior to any other horse of the same size. Many of them are used by the cowboys, and others are broken to harness and driven as carriage horses, being entirely trustworthy.

Several men living in Sidney make a living by catching wild horses. Until five or six years ago no one knew how to do it, and very few outsiders now understand the methods adopted. Mr. Livingston, of that town, describes the process as follows: "Two men always work together. Let them start out from Sidney, either north or south, and they are almost certain to find a bunch within fifteen miles. The plan is then to pitch a tent and make a camp, and one of the men, mounted on his best horse, carrying with him a few cold biscuits or something else convenient to eat, starts after the bunch. He does not ride very fast, and at first does not attempt to get near them, but is content to keep the bunch moving, not allowing them to stop and eat. The horses may go only ten or a dozen miles, or they may go fifty or sixty, but no matter how far they run, they will turn back and scent the range where they started. If they go far, the mettle of the rider and his horse will be tried to the utmost. The bunch must be kept moving, and there is no chance to change saddle horses until they turn, of their own accord, and pass near the camp.

"If the weather be clear and the nights not stormy the rider will continue after the animals, sometimes half a mile behind and sometimes within a hundred yards. It makes no difference whether it be dark or light, the horse that is ridden and that is trained to the business, follows after the herd. When the first rider succeeds in turning the bunch and bringing them back to the camp, he is relieved by the second, who, with a fresh horse, starts after them, while his companion turns in and takes a much-needed rest. This time they will not probably go so far. After a while they become tamer, and the hunter can turn them at pleasure. This may require a week, or it may be done in a couple of days. If the horses do not become scared they will not run

so far and are more easily managed. When the bunch becomes worried and starved out it is driven toward the nearest corral. Formerly corrals were erected especially for the purpose, but now there are so numerous that they are not needed any more.

Once inside, the wildest of the band are caught, and chains are fastened to their legs. Men walk among them and treat them kindly, and they soon learn that there is nothing to be feared. They are turned loose in any ordinary pasture, and when they are wanted they are driven to the corral and roped. If two men can gather a bunch of ten or a dozen horses in a week, they of course, make a good sum of money out of the transaction, as the animals will sell at from \$30 to \$50 each; but misfortune sometimes overtakes them when in pursuit. A bunch may run away from their pursuers entirely, and not be found for several days, or a storm coming up in the night may prevent his following them, and compel him to give up the chase, or possibly he will overestimate the strength of his horse, and ride the faithful animal until he drops.

"The present movement of the stock-raisers threatens to put a stop to this business. Mounted upon their grain-fed horses the hunters will pursue the wild bands when they are somewhat weakened by the rigors of winter. Riding as close as possible the men will shoot the stallions from time to time. It is hoped that by spring nearly all the stallions will have been killed and that the capture of the mares by the wholesale will then be made possible."

ABOUT SPIDERS

Spiders are far more numerous than the average person would suppose; in this country alone, it is said, we possess about 550 species. Yet of these only two are really familiar objects to every one—the house spider, which is responsible for the thick sheetlike webs that fill up neglected corners of our houses, and the garden spider, whose wheel-like snare, dewladen in the early morning, is one of the most beautiful objects of the garden.

The eyes of the spider are simple, and may be two, four, six, or eight in number. We do not know much about the senses of spiders, but with regard to their eyesight certain broad statements may be safely made. In the hunting and jumping spiders, which make no web, but either run their prey to earth in open chase or else stalk it cautiously before springing, the sense of sight is well developed; their eyes are often large and brilliant and sometimes placed on little turrets or tubercles raised above the level of the cephalothorax, which gives them a wider range of vision. Sight is not highly developed in those sedentary creatures who rely on their snares for the capture of prey, and their eyes frequently show a dull glazed appearance and are small in size; but though their vision is not keen, their sense of touch is extremely fine.

As regards their intelligence opinions vary. One

naturalist has succeeded in taming a few individuals but only by the expenditure of much patience and perseverance. A spider has no idea of the value of time, and the person who would secure their confidence must possess an almost unlimited stock of patience, otherwise it is simply waste of time to attempt the task. It is true that hunger may compel them to become tame (i. e. to accept insects that are offered them), if they are shut up without any natural supply of food, but when one leaves them free and only supplements their ordinary diet it takes a long time before they lose their suspiciousness. One naturalist tells of one occasion when sitting motionless for nearly three hours, holding a fly within tempting reach of a house spider, it was well nigh impossible to tempt the spider. The fly was almost touching her, but she was too wary a creature to seize a fly whose wings were held in a pair of pincers. Eventually the frantic kicks of the fly proved too much for her, and she gripped it fiercely in a death embrace.

The naturalist finally got her so tame that she would run out from her nest and take flies directly he dropped them into her web, or even accept them from the pincers. Nor would she trouble to retreat to her nest when, having sucked a fly dry, the naturalist removed its shriveled body from the snare, so little was she frightened. As the autumn advanced and flies became scarce the naturalist thought he would try to feed on raw meat and thus save himself time and trouble. He took a piece of meat about the size of a fly's body and attached to it the legs, wings and head of a fly that he had previously killed and cut up for this purpose.

The experimenter was rather pleased with the effect of his sham insect, and dropped it on to the web with considerable confidence, he felt so sure of the success of his experiment. The spider, accustomed to true flies being offered her, ran out of her retreat at once, but stopped short at a distance of about an inch from the sham fly, wavered for one instant, and then returned to her nest. For three successive days the man continued to drop into her snare at frequent intervals these pieces of dressed up meat, but she was never again deceived into leaving her nest to investigate them at closer quarters. Whether she detected the fraud by sight or by smell he had no means of telling.

Experiment was made in the same manner with two other spiders of the same species, but they proved equally difficult to deceive, and, unfortunately, the naturalist continued these experiments for so long, hoping that in time they would make up their minds to taste this new kind of prey, that they completely lost their trust in him, and would not afterward take the real flies he offered.

"Have a good time at the masquerade ball?"
"You bet. I was made up so my wife didn't know me."

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

Wildcats have killed six large buck deer in Kaul Park, at Trout Run, near St. Mary's, Pa. The carcasses of the deer have been found on the preserve and from indications it is believed many more of the animals have met the same fate, Kaul Park, which is one of the finest game preserves in the State, is now the scene of a big hunt for the cats. Two have been shot but many others have been able to escape the hunters. Dogs used to trail them have been killed.

John Bridgewater of the high school football team Beaver City, Nebraska, after a game the other day felt a sharp pain in his right knee. He could not determine the cause, but as the hours passed and the pain grew worse he went to a physician. An X-ray showed an obstruction in the knee. Bridgewater then recalled that he had been stabbed by a catfish when swimming last summer. Until after the game he had not been bothered. The physician removed the horn of the fish.

In connection with the efforts being made by American manufacturers to increase their sales in China, it is worth while to note the success attained by the large department stores in Canton and Shanghai. These establishments have introduced the fixed-price system of merchandizing with excellent results, and their large trade in foreign goods has induced most of the other native stores to carry imported lines. A chain of U. S. department stores in the principal cities of China would be of incalculable benefit to American trade generally. They would display an unlimited number of different lines, exclusively American, and the advantage of goods new to the Chinese market could be explained.

A discussion of "The Postage Stamp as a Possible Source of Infection" by J. Diner and G. Horst-

man appears in the Medical Times for October, 1919. The writers obtained postage stamps from fifty different places, note, being made in each case whether the stamps were kept exposed on the desk or held for sale in a drawer or cash register. Laboratory tests showed that no stamp was free from germs. Twenty of them contained colonies too numerous to count. Among the germs were colon bacilli, staphylococci, streptococci, pneumococci and diptheroid bacilli. Apparently there was little difference in bacterial content between the stamps exposed on the desk and those kept in drawers. The amount of danger presented by these organisms cannot be stated, as unfortunately, no tests were made to determine the virulence of the germs. In commenting on these results, American Medicine, while not encouraging the common practice of moistening stamps with the tongue, points out that if stamps were a grave source of infection a very large percentage of the population would undoubtedly be suffering from infections due to this cause. The fact is that most oral cavities will reveal the presence of some or all of the organisms above mentioned whether stamps have been licked or not.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

"What's the new cook so amused over?" "She's looking at the diploma I got at the cooking school," faltered the bride. "I hung it in the kitchen."

"Hello, old man. I hear you are going to marry Miss Swift. I congratulate you on your good taste." "Oh, that's all off. Not going to marry at all." "Congratulations on your good sense."

Mrs. Jones—Oh, dear, I have just broken my new smelling bottle! Mr. Jones—It is like you! All your belongings are either broken or shattered. Mrs. Jones—Quite true, John! Then you are a bit cracked!

"There's a fasting man who has been living for forty-five days on water." "That's nothing. My father lived for twenty years on water." "Go on!" "Yes; he was a sea captain."

She—I'm going to give you back our engagement ring. I love another. He—Give me his name and address. She—Horror! Do you mean to go and kill him? He—No, I want to sell him the ring.

Bacon—What are these "oil patches" we read so much about in the newspapers nowadays? Egbert—Didn't you ever see one? "Why, no. Did you?" "Sure! If you'd been here ten minutes ago you would have seen one, too. He just dropped in to see and sell me some oil stock."

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

SMUGGLING DOPE

About two years ago it was found that great quantities of prepared opium were being smuggled into the Philippines, where it found a ready sale at big prices. Aside from the violation of the revenue laws, the natives, like those of China, were becoming addicted to the use of the drug and the Government determined to break up the business. Accordingly all vessels coming into the islands were subjected to a most rigid scrutiny.

By one of these unexpected twists of fate, better known as chance, the skillfully laid plot of the smugglers was exposed at the time Francis Burton Harrison went to assume his duties as the Governor-General of the Philippines. Two trunks filled with opium were found among the luggage of his party. Lest the reader fear that the distinguished Governor of the archipelago had become a lawbreaker, it may be said at once that Mr. Harrison had been made the unwitting accomplice of a gang of smugglers who took advantage of the fact that he would be extended the courtesies of the port. This is another way of saying that because of his high official position his luggage was exempt from the usual customs inspection.

There were 440 tins of the opium and it was valued at \$20,000. The drug was in a Gladstone bag and a trunk which bore the name of a distinguished member of Gov. Harrison's suite. It seems that two pieces of baggage were placed on board the Manchuria at Kobe, Japan, by Emilio Spatolio, who succeeded in passing himself as a servant of the incoming Governor-General. The Gladstone bag and the trunk were actually passed with the other baggage.

It was after this shrewd bit of smuggling had been accomplished that the secret service division learned the details of the scheme. The two pieces of baggage were traced to a house in the outskirts of Manila. Chief Green and two of his assistants hastened there and peering in the open window found Spatolio and a confederate taking the tins of opium from the trunk.

They burst into the house with pointed pistols and demanded the opium in the name of the law. The two erstwhile smugglers, who had been chuckling over the ease with which they had accomplished the business, surrendered without a struggle. The opium was seized and the chief culprits and their tools were duly tried and punished.

The sensational character of the arrest broke the back of the smuggling industry in the Philippines. There are occasional instances now and then, but fear of the law has reduced the crime to a minimum.

WHY THE SEA HAS DIFFERENT COLORS

"The deep blue sea!" sings the poet.

"Tommyrot!" exclaims the traveller. "It is as green as an emerald. I've seen it."

"So have I," hotly declares the poet. "It is blue."

The poet and the traveller are in about the same position as the blind men and the elephant. One felt the trunk, the other the tail, and then they quarrelled about it, although both were right—as far as they went.

The sea is both green and blue. In some places it is nearly always blue, in others it is nearly always green. Scientists declare that the quantity of salt in the water has a great deal to do with this. They point out that the more rapid the evaporation of the water from the heat of the sun, the greater amount of salt there is in the water, and that the water that is extremely salt is always blue, while the water that does not contain such a large quantity of salt is green.

This, then, would make the color of the sea a matter of geography, or temperature, which is the same, as temperature is a matter of geography. One proof of this claim is held to be the Great Gulf Stream, which flows like a river out of the hot Caribbean Sea and up through the Atlantic to the northwest, a stream greater in volume than a hundred Mississippi.

This stream of water is as blue as the sky on a fair day, while as it proceeds northward the waters of the Atlantic on either side are quite green. The temperature of the Gulf Stream is about 74 degrees, Fahrenheit, while the Atlantic through which it flows is about 50 degrees.

As this stream flows northwest it widens, and at the same time grows shallower. From a width of almost forty miles off Florida, it stretches out to a width of about eighty miles off Cape Hatteras. But it retains its blue tints. Up off Newfoundland this stream becomes so thin that the cold water breaks through in patches, and here can be seen great patches of the cold water, green in color, in the midst of the stretch of blue water.

Away in the Arctic regions and in the Antarctic also, the water is always green. Around the equator, where the heat is terrific, the water is always blue. The Mediterranean Sea is blue because its waters are warm, because it is penned up and gets constant evaporation and because very few streams of great size flow into it.

Only a few years ago a great stream of yellow water was observed near the Gulf Stream. For a month or more it was seen then it disappeared and it is believed to have been muddy water caused by some volcanic upheaval beneath the water.

GOOD READING

"JOKE" MAY CAUSE DEATH

In escaping from a room on the fifth floor of a boarding house at No. 200 Madison Avenue, New York City in which she had been locked as a practical joke, Miss Ida Durham, twenty-one years old stepped through a skylight of an adjoining roof and fell to the third floor.

An ambulance took her to New York Hospital, suffering from a sprained back and possible internal injuries.

STAG ATTACKS LAWYER

Samuel M. Ankney, an attorney, Greensburgh, Pa., has just returned home from a hunting trip in Jefferson County in which he narrowly escaped death when attacked by a stag. Separated from the rest of the party, he was standing on an old log looking for a rabbit when the stag suddenly emerged from underbrush, charged at him before he even had time to think of self-defense and knocked him down. The stag was about to renew its attack when Ankney's cries for help brought his companions. The animal, which fled into the forest, had been chased by dogs.

TAKE BULLET FROM HEART.

A surgeon at St. Joseph's Hospital, Omaha, took the heart out of Steve Zakich, an Austrian who had shot himself, removed the bullet from the heart, replaced the organ and sewed up the incision. Four days after Zakich ate solid food and is practically out of danger.

The operation was performed when the bullet had been in Zakich's heart nearly thirty-six hours. The first doctors to see the man after he had shot himself thought he would die in a few minutes. In performing the operation the surgeons cut through three ribs to reach the heart. Dr. Simanek was the chief operator.

SOAP STIRS UP GEYSERS.

Visitors to the thermal region of the Black Water Valley in New Zealand are seldom disappointed in their anticipation in seeing real geysers at work. There are hundreds of geysers throughout this region, and usually one or more of the larger ones are in play, but it so happens sometimes that they become inactive without any apparent cause and fail to perform properly, despite the fact that scores of tourists are then within the reservation.

When this happens somebody usually drops a cake of soap down the outlet of the geyser, and then there is enough action to suit all concerned.

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My Moving Picture Machine is a good one and I would not give it away for \$25.00. It's the best machine I ever had and I wish everybody could have one. Addie Braskey, Jeanesville, Pa. Box 34.

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have catarrh anyway? You
were not born with catarrh
—you contracted it. This
offensive, unwholesome, dis-
agreeable complaint fastened
itself upon you and grew.
Nature in trying to prevent
more serious consequences
due to the congestion in
your body, finds an outlet
for the accumulated waste,
by way of catarrh. You
cannot get rid of it the way
you are going—sprays, lo-
tions, snuffing powders,
drugs and medicines won't
stop it. You know catarrh
leads to other troubles—seri-
ous ones—throat, lungs,
stomach, intestines—all be-
come affected. You can

The Perfect Man never enjoy good health if
Strongfort you have catarrh; you won't
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long as you have catarrh, and it detracts
from your personality to be hawking and
snuffing around others.

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Be Clean—Wholesome—Healthy—Virtue.
Go at it the right way. Nature's way; no
drugs, no medicines, and you banish cat-
arrh from your system. Let me show you
how, by my method of health building,
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